



These policies and procedures are excerpted from the NFCYM Organizational Manual

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

Preface

Affirmed in the documents of Vatican II, the Catholic Church actively engages the secular culture in order to bring transformation and conversion, to build and to be the Kingdom of God in the world.

The Church is not of the world although it is in the world (LG 13, GS 3). The Church engages culture through “sincere and prudent dialogue” (GS 21). Dialogue requires personal respect for others, even if they are in error (GS 28). Moreover, the Church “is willing to assist and promote” institutions that depend on “her and can be associated with her mission” (GS 42). The Church seeks but one goal, “to carry forward the work of Christ” because “Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served” (GS 3).

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) takes seriously its responsibility to advocate for the teachings and values of the Catholic Church in the secular and interfaith arena. This role includes organizational relationships, partnerships, and cooperative efforts with universities, organizations, corporations, government, and other faith denominations.

Cooperative partnerships enable organizations to extend their external mission, values, and goals where it may not have been previously possible. For NFCYM, cooperative partnerships foster our efforts in “serving those who serve the young Catholic Church” and in implementing the goals of *Renewing The Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (USCCB 1997):

- To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today
- To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community
- To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person

Cooperation with individuals, coalitions, and organizations that share common goals and advocate for youth can enable the NFCYM to be a more effective voice for the youth in our society.

With today’s limited resources, prudence requires NFCYM and others with whom we share common goals to divide duties, form sub-groups, share costs, etc. This is especially true in issue areas where NFCYM has been an active voice for a number of years. NFCYM's effectiveness in these areas is enhanced because of our networking efforts. At the same time it must be recognized that close networking relationships heighten the risk of having NFCYM associated

with positions that have not been approved or of expending resources in areas which are not directly tied to NFCYM's mission.

In order to foster those relationships that enhance NFCYM's effectiveness and to prevent the potential misuse of NFCYM's name and goodwill, the following limitations and precautions must be understood and agreed upon by NFCYM, its sponsoring members, and the individuals and groups with whom we cooperate.

Cooperative Efforts with Networks, Coalitions, Task Forces

1. The board of directors must approve NFCYM formal membership in any organization or group.
2. In order for NFCYM's working relationship with any network, coalition, or task force to become anything more than ad hoc, the board of directors determines that the following conditions have been met:
 - The purpose of the group, broadly interpreted, is consistent with positions held by NFCYM. NFCYM retains the absolute right to endorse, oppose or remain neutral on any action the group might take and to have this option explicitly recorded if exercised. Exercising this right will automatically cause NFCYM to review its relationship with the group.
 - The NFCYM must explicitly approve any use of its name on material produced for a specific purpose and/or public presentation. NFCYM's name must not appear in a manner that would imply or give the appearance of formal membership in another group (e.g. organizational letterhead, brochures, and flyers).

Principles of a Cooperative Partnership

Our organizational relationship with cooperative partners will be guided by the following principles:

- NFCYM advocates for Catholic Church teachings and values through engagement and respectful, honest, direct dialogue with the leadership of our partner organizations. Engagement, rather than separation, is required for effective advocacy.
- The starting point for cooperative partnerships is our mission to proclaim the Gospel to young people. Cooperative partnerships that strengthen our mission create our common ground (GS 42).
- Cooperation is not endorsement of all partner policies or resources, rather it is an intentional relationship fostering specific strategies; i.e. our goal is to serve young people and their adult leaders.
- The autonomy of the cooperative organization is respected at all times. NFCYM respects their mission and their autonomy and expects the same from them.

- NFCYM and the cooperative partner engage in an ongoing review of relationships at the local and national levels.
- Considering the magnitude of social media, cooperation must take into account the fragile control that organizations have on what is said or written online (GS 43). Web links can only be guaranteed to a first degree of connection. We seek to authentically communicate the truth about our organizations and the common ground our distinct missions create.
- Dioceses have the responsibility to determine which youth-serving organizations contribute to their vision for Catholic youth ministry.
- NFCYM regularly reviews the mission, values, and initiatives of our cooperative partners to assure compatibility with Catholic Church teachings and values.

Implementation Guidelines

- NFCYM fosters lines of communication and accountability at the local and national levels between our members and our cooperative partners.
- If issues or disagreements arise, they are first handled at the local (parish, school or diocese) level (subsidiarity). If resolution is not achieved, NFCYM national leadership will facilitate a dialogue with the leadership of the cooperative partner until resolution is achieved.
- NFCYM and our cooperative partners mutually determine the length and breadth of the cooperative relationship.
- Relationships at the local and national levels are reviewed regularly.

Participation with Others on Conferences, Workshops, or Events

1. NFCYM will participate in educational conferences, workshops, or events only under the following conditions:
 - The purpose is directly related to a current NFCYM issue.
 - It is clear that by participation in the conference, NFCYM in no way endorses the results. NFCYM has the right to influence the outcome or results of any given conference, workshop, or event and retains the right to oppose or remain neutral on any actions taken during the event.
2. The NFCYM will endorse or co-sponsor educational conferences, workshops, or events only under the following conditions:
 - The purpose is directly related to a current NFCYM issue.
 - The board of directors, or the executive committee when acting on behalf of the board, approves endorsement and co-sponsorship.
 - The event is consistent with NFCYM mission, values, and interests.

Endorsement of Resolutions

Resolutions will be considered by the NFCYM Board on an individual basis and will be considered in light of current and past NFCYM positions. Resolutions will normally not be considered unless they pertain to a current issue affecting youth. Resolutions on national issues must be considered in light of their implications on national, regional and local arch/diocese. The Board may choose to support as presented, support as amended, refer to a management committee for their review/approval, or take no action.

Service on Boards, Committees, Commissions

1. The executive director in consultation with the executive committee shall appoint NFCYM members or staff to serve as a representative of the NFCYM on boards or committees of coalitions or networks.
2. The NFCYM representative regularly reports to the board of directors.