



Archdiocese of Seattle Response to Attorney General Subpoena

SEATTLE, May 9, 2024 – The Archdiocese of Seattle has welcomed this opportunity to cooperate with the Attorney General since we received his original request in July 2023. We have been collaborating with the Attorney General’s Office for the past 10 months to demonstrate how the Archdiocese of Seattle has handled allegations of sexual abuse and how we are protecting children.

Sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults is an issue the Archdiocese of Seattle takes very seriously and has been proactively addressing for more than 40 years – taking many steps for preventing abuse, reporting abuse, supporting victims and their families, and publicizing our actions.

We have a good understanding of the content of our files and we have no concern about sharing them with the Attorney General lawfully and fairly. Over the years, the Archdiocese of Seattle has opened its files for review by law enforcement and independent outside organizations.

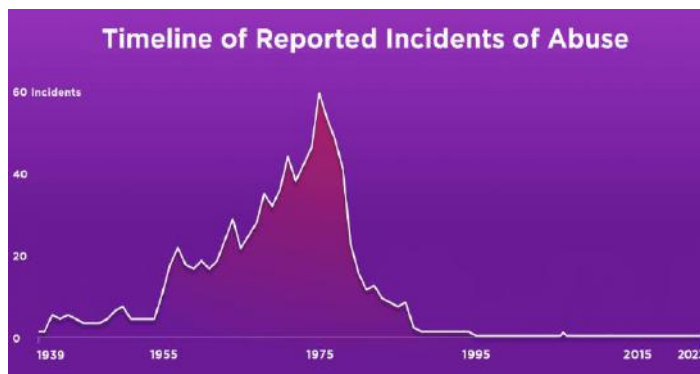
We share common goals with the Attorney General, specifically preventing abuse and helping victim survivors on their path to healing and peace while protecting their rights and not re-traumatizing them in the process. Cooperating with the Attorney General demonstrates our shared commitment to these goals and our desire for transparency.

The Request

Last July, the Washington State Attorney General’s Office issued a subpoena for files related to how the Archdiocese of Seattle has handled allegations of sexual abuse and how we are protecting children through our Safe Environment program. In late April 2024, the Attorney General’s Office supplemented the subpoena adding several new requests. Our legal team is cooperating in the process of this state-wide investigation, having responded to the subpoena and the associated documents request. The Archdiocese of Seattle has already turned over some of the requested information.

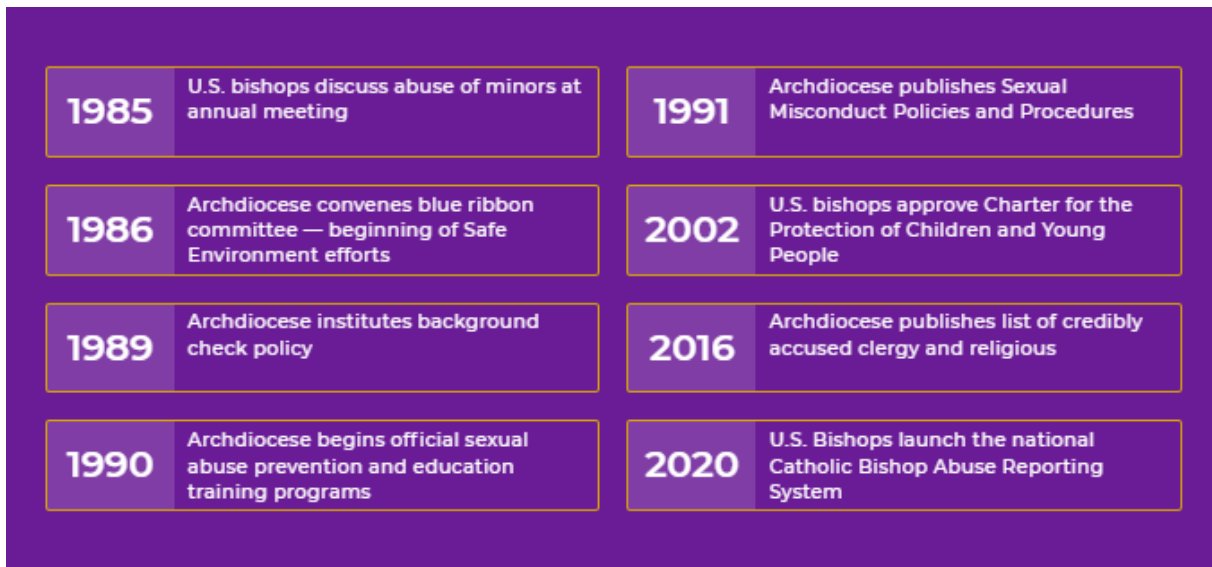
Historical context

The Archdiocese of Seattle has taken a proactive approach in addressing clergy sexual abuse of minors, starting in the 1980’s.



Sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by Church personnel peaked in 1975. We have no reports of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult by clergy having occurred since 2007. The chart demonstrates that 99% of reported incidents of abuse occurred prior to 1995.

As one of the first dioceses in the country to address this problem head on starting in the 1980's, the Archdiocese of Seattle has developed policies, prevention protocols, and safety education that has been the model for responsive action, including:



- In 1986 the Archdiocese of Seattle developed its first “blue ribbon committee” dedicated to prevention efforts. This eventually became our [Safe Environment](#) program, which has been updated and is still in effect today.
- In 1989, the Archdiocese of Seattle implemented background checks for all clergy and employees, which was a new practice for organizations at this time.
- In 1990, the Archdiocese of Seattle began official abuse prevention and education training programs for all employees and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults.
- In 1991, the Archdiocese of Seattle updated its Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures.
- In 2005, the Archdiocese of Seattle reconstituted a new Archdiocesan Review Board, which operates as an independent, confidential consultative body that advises the archbishop on issues related to sexual abuse of minors by clergy and assists him in assessing allegations and fitness for ministry.
- In 2016, the Archdiocese of Seattle publicly issued a [list](#) of all clergy in the archdiocese for whom allegations of sexual abuse of a minor have been admitted, established, or determined to be credible.

- In 2018, to help bring light to this issue, the Archdiocese of Seattle launched a website called [Protect and Heal](#) that provides facts about this issue in this local archdiocese, as well as the prevention efforts and support for victims and their families.
- In 2022, the Archdiocese of Seattle expanded its [Victim Assistance support](#) and resources, which includes pastoral care, professional counseling and support from the Victim Assistance Coordinator.
- In 2024, the Archdiocese of Seattle is launching its new Healing Ministry for victims and their families.
- In the spirit of transparency, the Archdiocese of Seattle regularly shares updates on settlement cases with continued calls for people who may have been abuse by Church personnel to come forward.
- Today, Archbishop Paul D. Etienne continues these efforts and promises his ongoing commitment to ensure these crimes and sins no longer occur within the church.

Ongoing Commitment

The Archdiocese of Seattle is committed to preventing the crime of sexual abuse and providing support and healing for victims and their families. Only by addressing this issue directly, will victims and the Church find healing. However, based on the recommendations and guidance of professionals, we must do so in a way that protects the privacy of victims and ensures they are not re-traumatized.

It is with this spirit that the Archdiocese of Seattle welcomes this opportunity to cooperate with the Attorney General's request to demonstrate how the Archdiocese of Seattle has handled allegations of sexual abuse and how we are protecting children.

To report any suspicion of abuse by any Church personnel, please contact local law enforcement. In addition, anyone who has knowledge of misconduct by a member of the clergy, an employee or a volunteer of the Archdiocese of Seattle is urged to call the archdiocesan hotline at 1-800-446-7762.

Media inquiries: Helen McClenahan, 206-375-5679 | helen.mcclenahan@seattlearch.org

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