

What should you expect if you report potential clergy misconduct to The Episcopal Church?

- The intake officer will collect information from you. You may provide information in the form that works best for you, including email, telephone, or hard copy. The intake officer may ask you to confirm some information in writing.
- The intake officer will ask whether you agree to become a “complainant.” A complainant receives regular procedural updates about the matter and has the right to be heard at several points in the process. If you agree to become a “complainant,” your identity will be disclosed to the clergy person who may have committed the misconduct. If you do not agree to become a complainant, your identity will not be disclosed, but the process to review concerns (or allegations) raised will still proceed.
- The intake officer may dismiss the matter if the intake officer concludes that it does not meet the threshold for misconduct under Title IV. If you are a complainant, the intake officer must notify you of the dismissal.
- As a complainant, you may appeal a dismissal by the intake officer. If you choose to appeal, the bishop will assign an advisor to help you prepare the appeal.
- If the intake officer does not dismiss the matter, the intake officer sends the matter to a reference panel—composed of the bishop, the intake officer, and the president of the disciplinary board—within 45 days. You will receive notice of this.
- If you are a complainant, the bishop will assign an advisor to you to help you understand the Title IV process, usually when the intake officer sends the matter to the reference panel.
- The reference panel meets within 45 days to decide the next steps for the matter. This may include concluding the matter with a pastoral response, referring the matter for investigation or a form of mediation, or referring the matter to the bishop to seek to settle the matter with the clergy member. For other matters, there may be an informal hearing before a conference panel or a formal hearing before a hearing panel.
- Members of the clergy are presumed innocent, and in the event of a proceeding before a hearing panel there must be clear and convincing evidence for disciplinary action.
- Most matters will be fully resolved within 15 months, and often much sooner.
- The bishop will decide on a pastoral response for those involved in the matter, which is provided by someone authorized by the bishop.
- The intake officer and the reference panel treat the information they receive as confidential, except that the bishop can release information for pastoral reasons.

What should you expect as a deacon, priest, or bishop if someone reports potential misconduct by you to The Episcopal Church?

- You will receive notice when the intake officer refers the matter to the reference panel—composed of the bishop, the intake officer, and the president of the disciplinary board—or when the intake officer decides to dismiss a matter because they conclude it does not meet the standard for determining misconduct under Title IV.

- Once the reference panel receives a matter from the intake officer, it meets within 45 days to decide the next steps. This may include concluding the matter with a pastoral response, referring the matter for investigation or a form of mediation, or referring the matter to the bishop to seek to settle the matter with you. For other matters, there may be an informal hearing before a conference panel or a formal hearing before a hearing panel.
- The bishop will assign an advisor to help you understand the Title IV process, usually when the matter is referred by the reference panel for investigation, mediation, or a hearing. You will also receive an advisor if the bishop issues a restriction on ministry or places you on administrative leave.
- While the Title IV matter is pending, the bishop may issue a restriction on ministry or place you on administrative leave—which means your ministry is temporarily suspended in part or in its entirety. These actions must be in writing, and you may appeal. This bishop will assign you an advisor when taking these actions.
- The bishop may also issue a pastoral direction to you at any time. A pastoral direction does not restrict your ministry or place you on administrative leave but imposes other requirements on you. You do not have the right to appeal a pastoral direction.
- You may reach an agreement with the bishop to end the matter at any time. Notice of that agreement will be widely reported in the church.
- You are required to cooperate with any Title IV process. You have the right to be represented by a lawyer of your choice, at your expense.
- You are presumed innocent, and in the event of a proceeding before a hearing panel there must be clear and convincing evidence for disciplinary action.
- You will receive regular status reports on the matter. Most matters will be fully resolved within 15 months, and often much sooner.
- The bishop will decide on a pastoral response for those involved in the matter, which is provided by someone authorized by the bishop.
- The intake officer and the reference panel treat the information they receive as confidential, except that the bishop can release information for pastoral reasons.

[This page](#) provides a summary of key parts of Title IV. You should consult the full text of Title IV for complete information.