



KofC Life Resource Center Guide



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Welcome

Welcome to the Texas State Council Life Resource Center Planning Guide. It is the intention of this guide to assist Knights of Columbus Councils in Texas in forming a Life Resource Center (LRC) at their local parish. It is not intended to start up a Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) where counselors assist women with unplanned pregnancies and ultrasound images are taken, but rather to start up a center that can assist moms in need with basic needs and reduce their struggle to have and take care of their babies.

This document is intended to serve not as a comprehensive guide, but instead one that will promote ideas and opportunities that you can use to start an LRC at your parish. Each Life

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Resource Center that is created will take on a personality of its own – there is no right or wrong way to start one – but hopefully this guide will assist in that formation and limit some problems that current Life Resource Centers have seen.

Why do we need to establish LRCs?

With the introduction of the Texas Heartbeat Law, and the likelihood of the fall of the Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion in the US, an increase in unplanned pregnancies going to term will rise since the ability to get an abortion is difficult or, in some areas of Texas, impossible. Many women will still travel out of state to find an abortion provider, but many women will not be able to afford to do so. This could put a strain on our current pro-life infrastructure. Many women will need to locate help with the basic needs that any mom encounters. A parish based LRC could help many low/no income women and provide them with the basic needs of their baby and quite possibly dissuade a mom from going over state lines for an abortion.

In March 2020 the USCCB created Walking with Moms in Need. The first paragraphs say is all:

“Pregnant and parenting moms in need are in our parishes and our neighborhoods. As Pope Francis reminds us, our parishes need to be “islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference.” Everyone in the parish community should know where to refer a pregnant woman in need.”

By forming LRCs not only do you answer the call to Walk with Moms in Need, you advance the cause of Life many times over. Prayerfully consider making this a reality in your community.

What does an LRC do?

If you are familiar with Food Pantries and/or St. Vincent DePaul Societies then you already understand the concept of an LRC. Instead of food items an LRC will distribute:

- Diapers of various sizes
- Clothing for baby
- Maternity Clothes for expectant moms
- Basic supplies for baby (this is not meant to be an exhaustive list – only one to create some ideas)
 - Soap
 - Shampoo
 - Washcloths
 - Small toys
 - Pacifiers / teethers
 - Changing pad
 - Diaper bag

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- May also supply:
 - Crib
 - Car seat
 - Baby bathtub
 - Maternity clothes
 - Clothes for toddlers (often there are needs that extend beyond mom and baby)
 - Nightlight (or is that Knightlight? LOL)
- And in some cases, could supply:
 - Formula
 - Highchair
 - Postpartum resources
 - Bibles
 - Rosaries
- All LRCs **need** to have:
 - Contact information for Crisis Pregnancy
 - Option Line at a minimum
 - Local Pregnancy Resource Center address and phone number
 - Contact for nearest Maternity Home
 - A Maternity Home is a place where a pregnant mom can go live and have her baby. Some women find themselves homeless... either the husband, boyfriend or family force her to get an abortion or leave.
 - Contact information for a local St. Vincent DePaul Society.
 - Contact for Catholic Charities (Great resource for low-income parents and immigrant parents.
 - Contacts for local post-abortion care
 - Contact information for domestic violence assistance.
 - Contact information for a local social worker that can assist in getting government assistance in the form of food stamps, housing etc.

Brief History

In January 1973 the Supreme Court legalized abortion in all 50 states up to birth. Since 1973 the Knights of Columbus have stood firmly behind the cause of Life and we will continue to do so. If Roe falls it does not mean we are done with Pro-Life rallies, Masses, rosaries, and fundraisers. If Roe falls is when our real work will begin. The creation of LRCs will likely be just the beginning. As Knights we are called to help those who are suffering, who need some help, who find

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themselves with no one else to turn to. What better thing to do then to assist our new moms with those items they need to take care of a new life and to do so at the parish level? We invite them to our parishes to obtain aid – hopefully they will feel welcomed and will stay.

What are the first steps to take?

Typically, a trip to see your local parish priest/pastor would be in order. If your pastor works well with the Knights of Columbus then that is certainly the best first step.

If you find yourself frequently at odds with your pastor it might be best to approach the person that heads up the parish food pantry or St. Vincent DePaul society (SVDPS).

If there is not a food pantry or SVDPS at your parish then the only means is to speak with your pastor.

After gaining permission to proceed you will want to adopt a Saint for the center to be based around. Blessed Michael McGivney comes to mind – while not St. Michael McGivney, yet, Fr. McGivney did care for his flock in extraordinary ways... one of them being the KofC that we belong to. But the choice is up to those doing the work... more on that in a few. The LRC team should start each day with an intercessory prayer to the saint selected. Requests to the local community would also be appropriate.

First things first

A. Form a Committee

Forming a committee that will take on the initial planning of an LRC would be best. Incorporate KofC and other parish groups, make sure the pastor, priests, deacons of the parish are invited. Don't forget the youth group leaders and please make sure that the food pantry/SVDPS leaders are invited... you do not want to step on their toes!

Remember – the Holy Spirit - if you will allow Him – will guide your decisions/direction and make the most of what is given/provided – so start there!! This is NOT about you and what you can accomplish. Find that humble spirit and be prepared to not get noticed much in this ministry. God will notice and He will be the one to cause great joy for your work.

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B. Where to set up

An LRC can be as simple as an outdoor storage building that is opened once a week to a multi-room office area open 6 days a week – or anything in between. It can also be operated within the Food Pantry or SVDPS – if these groups agree to be part of this or to take it over you have already accomplished a huge part of this mission.

C. Funding

Ideally the parish will back the LRC. Most KofC Councils would probably have a difficult time providing constant funding for such an endeavor. Funding can come in the form of a once or twice a year pulpit request, baby bottle campaign, special event like a golf tournament, or other events.

Funding can also come from the parish in the form of online giving. Many parishes have multiple opportunities for parishioners to give not only to the church, but to many of its ministries. Consider asking if the LRC can be listed as a parish ministry for this.

Monthly or quarterly drives to collect diaper, clothing, etc, will help keep stock at good levels and will help the parish to know you exists and will help keep donations coming.

D. Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any ministry, and this one will need plenty.

Some of the chores will be:

- Sorting, folding, cleaning of the items received in donation
- Fundraising
- Getting cleared for Safe Environment
- Manning the LRC when open
- Working with the Moms
- Putting together Baby Shower boxes
- Get the word out that your LRC is open and able to help
- To name a few items...

E. Start Up Costs

I contacted a Life Center in my diocese that has been in operation for 8 years. I requested a minimal start up cost that, if they needed to start all over, would be enough to get their operation running. One of the volunteers was nice enough to provide me with this:

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Diapers:

(Buying in bulk at Costco/Sam's has been the least expensive.)

- Size 1 x 4 @ \$35 = \$140
- Size 2 x 3 @ \$35 = \$140
- Size 3 x 1 @ 45 = \$45
- Box of wipes x 2 @ \$22 = \$44

Total \$369

Commonly Needed Clothes

2 PJs + 5 Onesies for girl & boy in each of the following sizes

- Size 0-3 months (or 3 months)
- Size 3-6 months (or 6 months)
- Size 6-9 months (or 9 months)
- Size 9-12 months (or 12 months)

(Costs of PJs range from \$6-\$8 each)

- 4 PJs x 4 sizes = \$96 to \$128 x 2 for winter / summer = \$192 - \$256
- Costs of Onesies range from \$2.50 - \$5 each
- 10 Onesies x 4 sizes = \$100 - \$200 x 2 for winter / summer = \$200 - \$400

Total to stock clothes = \$396 - \$656

Total cost \$800 - \$1000 using this example.

Note that there are no cribs, car seats, or much of what I listed above in the [What does an LRC do](#) section... This center receives the majority of its stock from donations from the parish, including new and used clothes, cribs, car seats etc. – and they do get a lot of diaper donations – but frequently there is a need for certain sizes that forces them to make a purchase. The list above is meant to be an example startup and not an exhaustive list.

Each LRC will need shelving, sorting containers, bags, basic office supplies.

Note - The more the parish/community knows and responds to the needs of the LRC, the fewer LRC/parish dollars that will have to be spent on keeping stock.

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F. Vetting Clients

The first question that came to my mind is vetting clients. If there is a SVDPS in operation at your parish you already have this covered. If you do not have a SVDPS in place then what can you do to keep people from playing the system – to get free stuff even if they do not need it. Unfortunately, this is a reality of our times. There are people that look for opportunities to cash in on the charity of others.

Can steps be taken? Yes. The question should be do you have the time and opportunity to take those steps.

For years I have been the State Pro-Life Chairman for the Knights in Texas and I have long operated the ACE Wing Program – a program where a Knight does 5 Public Pro-Life events in a year's time and when completed he send me a form outlining what he did.

I have been asked multiple times if I check up on the Knight and those events – were they real events or were they are phantoms that were dreamed up so that he could gain the ACE Wings... I never check... if a Knight is going to lie about something like that then that is between himself and the good Lord... the Knight can answer to Him.

I feel much the same here... if people play the system they will win – here... they will lose when it comes between themselves and God.

I do believe that God will fill any voids that those who have selfish motives take from us... and we will be all the stronger if we pray each time an item(s) is given away.... Prayers for that person, the baby, family, and that the LRC will receive a donation to refill what was removed – regardless if it was taken in a selfish act or a true need.

Five Part Planning Guide

To achieve these goals and any goals the council wishes to obtain, it is important to have a plan leading up to the day of the event and post event activities.

1. Assign a Chairman and Co-Chairman

- These people are the drivers of the LRC
 - Can be yearly appointments or some other term – up to the committee to decide.

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2. Find a Site

- You might be given a choice, you might not – if there are choices take it up with the committee. Some items to discuss:
 - Accessibility
 - Can the LRC be accessed if the church is closed?
 - Will the LRC need to provide electrical costs?
 - Are there shelves and chairs available?
 - Any security concerns when not open?
 - Are there any remodeling considerations that need to be done before the LRC can open?

3. How often will the LRC be open

- This will largely depend on the number of volunteers that you have and what the church/pastor would like. Large discussion item – however one that can change as needed as the PRC grows in its community.

4. Insurance Requirements

- Ideally this will fall under the Parish insurance policy – a serious discussion item with the pastor or general manager of the parish.

5. Policies for providing assistance

- A written set of guidelines will help reduce confusion and issues in the future. For example, if a mom comes in needing clothes for her newborn and also has older children the LRC needs to have an answer to this before being faced with it. You never want one volunteer doing one thing and another volunteer doing something else when dealing with people in need. You do not want claims that the LRC treats some people well and limits its help on others...
 - Will the LRC only help pregnant moms, moms with infants, moms with children up to a certain age?
 - How will the LRC handle repeat visitors – how frequent, how often
 - Some type of client intake and record keeping of what was given when and to whom would be helpful to track the LRC operations over time and determine inventory needs and when to adjust policies
- Some training needs to be set up so that all volunteers follow a set of guidelines. The training can be something as little as a meeting with the Chairman to viewing policy videos if the parish/diocese has them.

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- And in case you are wondering – you should try to help the older children whenever you can – some families need a lot more help than others...

Goals

Instead of the usual goals that the Knights are familiar with – membership goals, insurance goals, how much was made at the last fundraiser, the goals of an LRC are different. Here are a few to consider:

- Number of volunteers
 - Have 5 – set a goal to increase to 8 – the more hands to carry a load the lighter it becomes.
- Have a Baby Shower at the parish
 - Invite the Parish to bring diapers or whatever is the greatest need.
- Set up a place in the parish bulletin that shows the LRCs greatest need for that week so that the parish can assist the next Sunday.
- Served 20 moms last year – aim to educate the community and not just the parish that you are there and ready to help.
- Got a good handle on diapers and baby clothes – add maternity clothing to the list of items you stock – most women do not hang onto maternity clothes for long after they are out of them since styles change... let your parish know that there is a need and they will respond.

Conclusion

There is never a conclusion when it comes to helping out those in need. This document is meant to help engage you with the concept of an LRC – it is by no means a completed document. As ideas and issue arise, I will add to this so that people like yourself who wish to help can learn from the issues you have encountered. Please let me know of any items that need to be edited, added, or even deleted...

Thank you in advance for your devotion to Life and to those around you! tc

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Notes