

General Guidelines To Ministerial Licensing

Where To Start...

Praise the Lord for the His call and leading in your life, and for your desire to follow His call to enter a lifetime of service as a minister in the Church of the Nazarene!

The process begins with a Local Minister's License granted by your local church. This may be followed by a District License granted by the district assembly. And it may eventually lead to ordination. That will depend upon all educational and ministry experience requirements being met, and the District Board of Ministry determines that you are of excellent character, and have the necessary knowledge, gifts and graces for lifetime ministry in the Church of the Nazarene.

Of course, it must be understood by the candidate throughout this process that no person is promised or guaranteed to be ordained just because she/ he has completed all of the requirements. This is not like qualifying for a driver's license or earning a degree. This process is a multi-faceted, transformational journey toward fulfilling a calling placed on one's life by the invisible Creator of the universe. And we less-than-perfect humans are tasked with discerning His will and call on your life.

Step 1...

The first step is to discuss your call with your pastor. If deemed appropriate, after having explored the process and procedures, your pastor and church board may decide to grant you a *Local Minister's License*. You will find Local Licensing Procedures, Application, and Interview Guidelines at Floridnaz.com/ministry-preparation. A personal background check and a verification of previous credential history are also required as part of this initial process.

Step 2...

The second step is to enroll with the District Board of Ministry. To do this, complete the **"Registering Your Call"** form (found on Floridnaz.com/ministry-preparation; as either a download form or an online form). This should be sent to the District Secretary, Rev. Steve Egidio (steve@floridnaz.com). In addition, transcripts of any/ all college and/or graduate work (including Bible colleges or training centers) should be sent to Rev. Egidio for evaluation.

Completion of a specific 25-course *Validated Course of Study* is required by The General Board and The International Board of Education Church of the Nazarene, as administered by Clergy Development and the District Board of Ministry. A list of the classes required by the Validated Course of Study, is available on Floridnaz.com/ministry-preparation.

Moving From Local License To District License...

Presuming you have read and followed the Local Minister's Licensing procedures, in order to be eligible to apply for a *District Minister's License*, you must have had a *Local License* no less than *one year*, and you must have completed at least six courses in the *Validated Course of Study*, including the course "*History & Polity of the Church of the Nazarene*," *prior to* receiving a District License. There are no exceptions. You will find information regarding the required courses on the district website – Floridnaz.com/ministry-preparation.

It is important to note, related to candidate; a past divorce must be removed as a barrier to district licensing and future ordination, before a district license is considered. The divorce situation must be examined by the District Board of Ministry, who must then determine if the situation merits a request for removal as barrier from the Board of General Superintendents. No district license or future ordination may be considered until the divorce situation has been settled. Be aware, the Board of General Superintendents have final determination on the request. It is advisable that the candidate petition the District Board of Ministry early in the process regarding the divorce situation. Guidelines are available upon request.

Two Orders / Each Has Its Place...

There are two Orders of Ordained ministry in the Church of the Nazarene: Elder and Deacon. Ordination as a Deacon is for those who are called to ministry in a specific area such as Youth, Christian Education, Administration, Music, etc., but not specifically called to preach. Ordination as an Elder (preaching and general pastoral ministry) is applicable to any ministry position. An Elder

may serve in any clergy position in the Church of the Nazarene. A Deacon must always serve under the supervision of an Elder and may not be placed as the permanent senior or solo pastor. Read sections 500 – 534.3 in the 2017-2021 Nazarene Manual. You may want to pay particular attention to the sections of descriptions of the various ministry roles. The track which you feel called to follow will determine some of the coursework that is required.

Following are some general guidelines regarding the licensing and study procedure:

- District Ministers Licenses are granted at the District Assembly in April / May of each year.
- Each year the Board of Ministry will interview prospective *District License* candidates who wish to be granted a first-time, or renewal District License. To be considered for a District License, you must submit an *Application for Minister's License* to the District Secretary. Your senior pastor must send a recommendation form to the District Secretary at the same time. All forms are available for download on district website – Floridanaz.com/credentials.
- The District Secretary may be contacted with questions about the forms and guidelines – Rev. Steve Egidio, steve@floridanaz.com.
- Currently there are no Course of Study classes offered in English locally. Classes may be taken at Nazarene Bible College Online (NBC.edu) or Northwest Nazarene University online (NNU.edu).

Note: Ask about the NBC free online course offer. Nazarene Bible College online also offers certain programs in other languages. Ask the admissions office about which languages for which programs/classes are available.

- **Online:** Nazarene Bible College (NBC): www.nbc.edu/online; Courses may be taken through the *Ministry Preparation Program* at a minimal charge for no college credit, but which satisfy the ordination requirements. Ask the admissions office about which degree programs also fulfill the ordination requirements. Courses also available for Haitian students in French.
- **Online:** Northwest Nazarene University (NNU): <https://cos.nnu.edu/>; Courses may be taken through the *Online Course of Study program* at a minimal charge for no college credit, but which satisfy the ordination requirements. Ask the admissions office about which degree programs also fulfill the ordination requirements.

Required Course of Study classes are available in Spanish through Centro de Estudios Ministeriales (CEM), Rev. Nancy Cortes, Director, (nancycortescem@gmail.com).

Board of Ministry Policy Information...

- It is the policy of Florida District to credit to the *Course of Study* only college-level courses taken for credit from an accredited college or institution, if applicable, and/ or applicable courses taken through one of our Nazarene Colleges/ Universities and the Nazarene training centers listed above. Audited courses, CEU courses, or seminars and workshops that do not offer college credit are not acceptable.
- After being granted the first *District License* it is necessary to complete *at least two required courses each year*, until you have completed the *Course of Study*, in order to be considered for renewal of the District License annually. Failure to complete two courses in a year will result in the District License not being renewed. There are no exceptions to this Manual requirement (2017-2021 Manual 532.3). (You may go back to holding a Local License and reapply for a District License at a later time.)

Requirements to be fulfilled before being considered for Ordination...

- **Course of Study** requirement: It is a Manual requirement that the *Course of Study* be completed, and graduation be granted within ten (10) years of receiving the first District License. (2017-2021 Manual, 532.4). Exceptions to this requirement are extremely rare, and are determined by the JGS.

- **District Licensing** requirement: In addition to completing the *Course of Study*, it is necessary to have held the *District License for no less than three consecutive years, and currently hold a district license*. If the District License is not renewed for any reason, when reapplication is made, the three consecutive years requirement begins from the *new date of the District License*. No exceptions to this Manual requirement. (2017-2021 Nazarene Manual: Deacon 533-533.4; Elder 534 – 534.3).
- **Time in Service** requirement: It is necessary to have no less than *three consecutive years of full-time assigned service in a local Church/ or approved ministry assignment, and be serving in a ministry position at the time being considered for ordination*. Part-time service requires a longer period of time in service, i.e., depending upon involvement. Part-time service generally means at least four or five consecutive years of assigned service, and be serving in a ministry position at the time being considered for ordination. (2017-2021 Nazarene Manual: Deacon 533-533.4; Elder 534 – 534.4). Exceptions to this Manual requirement are extremely rare, and are determined by the JGS.

Note the following instructions regarding ministerial experience: *Sr. Pastors of local churches are considered full-time, even if they are bivocational. Their service status fulfills the Manual’s minimum requirement of three consecutive years as long as they are currently assigned and there are no significant gaps in their service record. The Board of Ministry will have final determination on their record of service. Regarding assigned ministers in local churches, other than the Pastor, such as associate pastors, it is necessary for the local Church to document for the Board of Ministry’s satisfaction the specific kinds of ministry experiences (preaching, teaching, counseling, administration, etc.) that have been included in your ministry. For any status of service (full-time paid, part-time paid, “pro bono” volunteer unpaid**), this means you must be “hired” by the pastor and church board for a specific full-time position, must have a job description, and be expected to fulfill specific duties within the church under the direct supervision of the pastor or another staff person. If paid as full-time, it must be primary livelihood. This is the service status that fulfills the three consecutive years of service requirement. If paid as part-time, more than three years is required, depending upon the minister’s involvement in the Local Church. Non-paid ministry experience may accrue toward your ministry service requirement. However, it must be as a “pro-bono” staff position rather than simply typical volunteer work in the church. In such a case, more than three consecutive years will be required as fulfillment of the service requirement. A mix of paid and un-paid service may be considered, based on the extent of the minister’s involvement in the local Church.*

Resources Available...

Free download is the “[Guide to Ministerial Preparation and Ordination](#)” (2017). This book lays out in less complicated language precisely what you need to do step-by-step all the way to ordination, along with other helpful information for preparing for ministry. You may find the guide here → <https://www.floridanaz.com/ministry-preparation>.

USA/ Canada Region Clergy Development Resources...

<https://www.usacanadaregion.org/ministry/clergy-development>

Mentor...

It is also advisable to prayerfully find an experienced minister who may act as a mentor to you and will be available to you in a mutually beneficial relationship. This person may be your local pastor or another minister whom you come to trust for guidance and advice.

Final Comments...

It is important for the candidate to keep a file of all information and records that pertain to your ministerial license and *Course of Study* beginning when you receive your Local License. This will be an important reference for you as you move toward ordination, as well as a safeguard for you against duplication of courses, and as a record of your experience. It is *your* responsibility to keep track of coursework, your ministry experience, and all deadlines for submitting applications, interviews, etc. Failure to meet deadlines, submit appropriate forms and applications, or meet any other requirements is solely the responsibility of the candidate.