

Local Church Involvement

Introduction

In the Church of the Nazarene

We recognize all Christians are “God called people” who are to engage as servants of Jesus in ministry as a lifestyle.

We also recognize that there are those who clearly identify a specific call of God to ordained ministry within the church. This pursuit calls them into a special relationship with the local church pastor, the local church board, the Florida District, and the Church of the Nazarene. Those who express a call to ordained ministry become Ministers in Training (MITs) upon receiving a Local Minister’s License from their local church board and registration of their call with the Florida District.

Two Key Components in the journey of every Florida District Minister in Training (MIT).

Educational: We believe in the preparation of heart and mind. Our educational outcomes are directed by our Manual, overseen by the Florida District Board of Ministry (BOM) and can be fulfilled through the following educational pursuit: Seminary training, University degrees, Bible College diplomas, online certificate programs, and our own district training center (FNBI) in partnership with NBC. We have no particular mode of preference as each student’s ministerial journey is unique.

Experiential: While we have no particular preference for the mode of educational delivery, we do however strongly advocate for MITs to be actively engaged in ministry within a local church throughout their ministerial development. We believe in the value of hands on ministry in the context of a mentoring relationship. This pursuit of practical experiences through local ministry is a vital component in determining if an MIT has the gifts and graces for vocational ministry. The local pastor and church board must help guide the experience component.

Five Critical Areas that the Local Church Pastor, Local Church Board and the MIT need to address.

1. Granting a local minister’s license (initial license)

- a. The procedures and forms needed for issuing a Local Minister’s License can be found on the Florida District’s website, www.floridanaz.com/ministry-preparation. Local License is active for one year, but may be renewed, as explained in #2 below.
- b. The local church must conduct a background check prior to granting the first local license to an MIT. This includes both a criminal background check, a verification of prior credential history, as well as a formal interview process which includes: an application for Local Minister’s License, the calling of references, and an interview with the church board or a committee of the church board which has been created for the purpose of interviewing and developing local ministers.
- d. An application form for a local minister’s license, interview question guide for the church board, and checklist for local license interview can be found on the Florida District’s website at www.floridanaz.com/ministry-preparation.
- e. A local minister’s license form can be found on Clergy Development’s website, <https://usacanadaregion.org/clergy-development/call-ministry/request-for-local-ministers-license>.
- f. An MIT must have held a local license for one year and have met the minimum educational requirement prior to the granting of a district license (2017-2021 Manual 532.1).

Note: Renewal of a local minister’s license. The local church board may renew a local license for a second year, as it deems appropriate. An annual interview should be conducted, along with whatever other procedure the local church may impose. However, the local church board may renew the local license for a third year only if the candidate has completed at least two classes in the validated course of study.

2. Creating a clear role description

- a. A clear role description which puts into writing the relationship between the MIT and pastor/board should be established at the time of pursuing a district license. This is for all MITs paid and unpaid. Every MIT needs a clear understanding of their responsibilities, who they are accountable to, and the expectations of the local church for their ministry.

b. This role description should be reviewed annually at the time of recommending district license renewal and updated and expanded as appropriate.

The District BOM would ask that the following be explored as the role description is formalized:

Ministry Description: A clear job description spelling out ministry roles and expectations.

Ministry Opportunities: The local church should offer opportunities for expanded ministry (e.g. pulpit supply, small group leadership, invitation to attend board meetings, encouragement to start new ministries or reshape current ministries, etc.).

Accountability: Clear accountability must be established. Who will oversee the implementation and hold the MIT accountable for this agreement? What method of reporting will be given to the pastor/board? How often will the MIT meet with their supervisor?

Disciple-making: We are committed to making disciples and we would expect that of our MITs. A question we would like you to address is “Who is the MIT discipling and who is discipling the MIT?”

Hours: What number of hours do the MIT and Church Board agree will be the weekly average over the next year? (See Time in Service discussion in section 3c.)

Role Code: What role code does the board recommend to the regional team? (See Role Code listing in section 3d.)

The initial role description and all annual updates need to be shared with the MIT’s regional coach. A sample of an MIT’s Role Description may be found on the Florida District Board of Ministry website, <https://www.floridanaz.com/ministry-preparation>.

3. Determining Time in Service: A designation must be made about whether the MIT will be considered full time or part time.

a. Full time: Our Manual (533.3, 534.3) mandates no less than three years of full-time work in an assigned ministry role in order to be considered for ordination. For the purpose of fulfilling the requirements, the General Secretary’s Office defines full time as: An MIT “who works 30 or more hours a week and earns at least 51% of his or her income from the church.”

b. Part time: Anything less than the above definition will be considered part time. While a mandatory number of hours is not specifically spelled out, there is a basic understanding that “an MIT’s testimony and service needs to demonstrate that their call to ministry is primary to all other pursuits” (533.3, 534.3). A person who is part time should assume it will normally require at least six years of service to complete the experiential component which could lead to consideration for ordination.

Note: The Manual states clearly that the time of service which will meet the “experience requirement” starts when one becomes an “assigned minister” (533.3, 534.3) and an MIT is not an assigned minister until they have been granted a district license. So, while a local board helps an MIT determine a role code, the “experience clock” doesn’t start until the MIT receives a district license.

4. Establishing a proper Role Code

a. It is the responsibility of the Church Board to recommend a role code (Manual 505-528) that will help the MIT and the district in the ongoing oversight and training.

b. Here is a list of the role codes for Ministers in Training:

DA - District Assignment: Elected or employed by district as their *primary* assignment.

EDU - Education: Serves as administrative staff or faculty at a Nazarene Educational Institution.

EVR - Evangelist, Registered: A minister who has indicated a desire to pursue evangelism as his or her primary ministry. Registration shall be for one year. Renewal by subsequent district assemblies shall be granted on both the quality and quantity of work in evangelism in the year prior to the assembly.

GA - General Church Assignment: Elected or employed by General Board to serve at the General Church level. Equal to or greater than 30 hours per week as primary assignment.

PAS - Pastor: Lead pastor or Co-pastor of local church.

PAC-PAS – Lead Pastor in a Parent Affiliated Church.

PSV-FT – Pastoral Service, Full-Time: Various levels of pastoral service in connection with a local church, works 30+ hrs/wk and earns 51% of their income from the church.

PSV-PT – Pastoral Service, Part-Time: Various levels of pastoral service in connection with a local church, works less than 30 hrs/wk and earns less than 51% of their income from the church.

SER - Song Evangelist, Registered: A minister who is involved in active ministry and has evangelism through music as his or her primary assignment.

SPC - Special Service/Interdenominational:

In active service not otherwise provided for, approved by the District Advisory Board; OR
Serving an educational institution, evangelistic or missionary organization not related to the church; approved by the District Advisory Board (subject to Manual 538.13).

STU - Student: Code that is allowed to indicate that a member of the clergy is enrolled in a validated course of study. This is not considered an assigned role, so no experience is granted.

U - Unassigned: Status code used to indicate that the minister is not currently in an active assignment.

5. Sr. Pastor / Lead Pastor continued involvement

a. It is to be understand that the MIT's Sr. Pastor / Lead Pastor will attend the MIT's first district license interview to bring context and perspective to the initial interview experience.

b. The Sr. Pastor / Lead Pastor should maintain familiarity with the ongoing progress of their local Church MIT's ministerial development.