

Sequence of the Ministerial Candidate's Journey

(Florida District Process; may vary from other districts)

1. Processing a Call to Ministry: This is the beginning point. For a person who has a sense of God's call to vocational ministry the process begins by sharing the call with your local pastor who then will guide and nurture your call. Early on in exploring your sense of a call to ministry it is strongly encouraged that you work through the "**Guide to Ministerial Preparation and Ordination**" with your Senior Pastor. The document may be obtained from www.floridanaz.com/ministry-preparation.

If after working through this Guide you and your pastor agree that you are ready, the next step would be to complete the "Application for a Local Ministers License" and meet with the church board. The pertinent information regarding the Local Minister's License may be found here:

<https://www.usacanadaregion.org/clergy-development/tools-for-the-local-church>

2. Local Ministers License: Part of the guidance is for the local church to submit a "**Request for Verification of Credential History**" form through the district office (online form available at www.floridanaz.com/ministry-preparation) and a background check for the local church (consult www.floridanaz.com/resources for the procedure to use). You will also meet with the local church board and if they affirm the call, they can issue a local license. In addition, you will need to register your call with the District Board of Ministry, so your contact information may be added to the ministerial candidate database from which you will receive important information about the district's ministerial development process. The form to use for registering your call with the District Board of Ministry can be found at www.floridanaz.com/ministry-preparation.

It is very important that you meet regularly with your Senior Pastor or another experienced minister (male to male; female to female) for mentoring and for continued nurturing of your call to ministry. Such a relationship will have positive benefits for both student and mentor. It should be fostered early in the journey.

3. Educational Requirements: A significant aspect of this ministerial journey pertains to the educational requirements. Ministerial candidates must complete a validated course of study program which consists of 25 classes, including a Supervised Ministry Experience. This program falls under the guidance of the District Board of Ministry – Ministerial Studies committee. There are various valid paths to fulfilling this requirement. These are the primary paths...

- **College:** All Nazarene Universities in the US/ Canada Region have certain ministry degree programs that fulfill the requirements of the validated course of study program. Please contact the Nazarene school of your choice to discuss the options available. Go to Nazarene.org and search Nazarene Universities. **Note:** transcripts from schools or programs, other than Nazarene institutions, must be evaluated and approved by the Board of Ministry prior to accepting any of the students' classwork for consideration in fulfillment of the requirements.
- **Seminary:** For those students who already have a valid bachelor's degree, The Master of Divinity online degree at Nazarene Theological Seminary is designed to satisfy the validated course of study, and to equip ministerial students to reach today's world with its post-Christian challenges. Go to NTS.edu for information.
- **Online Programs:** Nazarene Bible College (NBC.edu) and Northwest Nazarene University (NNU.edu) both have online, non-degree ministry preparation programs which will satisfy the minimum requirements of the validated course of study. While no degree is earned, each program provides some credits that may be transferred into a ministry degree program at a later time, should the candidate decide to pursue a full degree.
- **Florida District Nazarene Bible Institute:** As a district we provide a limited number of educational opportunities related to the validated course of study. These opportunities may take the form of an intense, two-day classroom setting, a one-on-one supervised study over a set number of weeks; or a Church-based training initiative using the Modular Course of Study curriculum. Check at floridanaz.com/Board of Ministry often for updates.

4. District Licensing: After holding a local license for at least one year (12 months) and completing at least one-fourth of the educational requirements (including Nazarene History and Polity) in a validated course of study program, you may be eligible to apply for a first-time district license (see 2017-2021 Manual 532.1). Your pastor and church board must recommend you for a first-time District Minister's License. There is a procedure for this recommendation to be handled. The details are available at <https://www.floridanaz.com/credentials>. When that recommendation has been received, you may complete the "Application for District License." Contact the District Secretary for the proper form for this purpose.

Note: Be sure the district office has your current full contact information so that you may receive the latest information regarding district license interviews, etc.

5. Experience/ Service-Time Requirements: Extending from the first district license granted through the invitation to be considered for ordination, the candidate should be vitally engaged in active ministry in their local church. The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene offers guidelines and the Florida District has expectations that you will be actively engaged in ministry for a prescribed period of time before you would be considered for ordination (see Manual 532 - 534.3).

- **Vocational calling:** In the Church of the Nazarene, we believe all Christ-followers are called to ministry. However, we also acknowledge that God asks some to fulfill a vocational call. A vital part of this journey is to gain practical experience. This calls for the ministerial candidates to work closely with his or her local pastor and church board. Opportunities for meaningful engagement need to be fostered. In this regard a "formal agreement" with the pastor and local church board should be formulated. The agreement should be of "pastoral substance" so the ministerial candidate gains a clear understanding of the role of vocational ministry. A clearly stated description of what is expected from and offered to a ministerial candidate is a crucial part of the agreement. Both the candidate and the pastor/board need to lean into making this significant and helpful.

- **The Supervised Ministry Experience (SME)** is a helpful part of the educational experience that leads toward vocational ministry. A list is provided in the SME Module Student Guide, guiding each candidate toward the type of experiences that should be encountered. Get this guide at:

https://www.usacanadaregion.org/sites/usacanadaregion.org/files/PDF/guides/SMEStuGu_0.pdf

- **Ministry Mentoring:** It is always advisable that you find and develop an ongoing mentoring relationship with an experienced fellow minister (male to male; female to female), with whom you share issues, and develop mutual understanding. This relationship should be fostered early in your ministerial journey and nurtured to continue through a lifetime.

6. Divorce: If there is a divorce in your past, there is an additional step you need to take. You cannot be granted a first-time district license until you have work through the process to have the divorce barrier lifted. Contact the District Secretary to obtain the necessary information regarding this issue. It will require additional time for you to be considered for a first-time district license.

7. Ministerial Candidate Workshop (MCW): We are committed to doing everything we can to help our candidates become self-aware and ministry aware. Therefore, we mandate that all candidates participate in a directed assessment weekend called Ministerial Candidate Workshop. This experience is conducted by the Center for Pastoral Care at Trevecca Nazarene University. The event is held at Camp Graner Creek, Tennessee. Ideally, we want our candidates to participate in this early in their journey. It is a requirement you must complete prior to being considered for ordination.

8. Ordination consideration: Ordination is not earned, or which one claims a right to receive. It is conferred upon you by those charged to oversee your ministerial preparation. Completing your education and experience criteria is only part of the journey. The District Board of Ministry also considers character and maturity as very important aspects of your development as a minister when recommending you to the General Superintendent in jurisdiction and the district assembly for your ordination (See Manual 502). When the Board of Ministry is ready to recommend you for potential ordination, you will be invited to an interview with the Board.