

## The District Minister's License

A District Minister's License is the next level of licensing. A district licensed minister has an expanded sphere of ministry and responsibilities in the church (Manual 530.7) and is a member of the clergy rather than a lay member of the local church. For this reason, both the process and the requirements for receiving this license differ from what is involved in obtaining a Local Minister's License. Each District has a board that oversees the credentialing process for the granting of District Licenses and recommendations for ordination. Some districts organize themselves as a single Board of Ministry while other districts divide the responsibilities between two separate boards: the District Ministerial Studies Board, responsible for helping shape lifelong learning opportunities for all ministers and for guiding those individuals completing the Course of Study; and the District Ministerial Credentials Board, responsible for a variety of duties including recommending individuals for district licensing and for ordination.

### Applying for a District Minister's License

- You may apply for a district license on the following conditions:
1. You must have held a Local Minister's License for at least one full year;
  2. You must have completed at least one-fourth of the required Course of Study through participation in a validated Course of Study program;
  3. If you have ever been divorced, the Board of General Superintendents must have granted approval for you to apply for a District Minister's License (further information provided below);
  4. Your local church board must recommend to your District Board of Ministry that you be granted a District Minister's License or that your District Minister's License be renewed.

*In addition to interviewing candidates for district licenses and ordination, many districts include a broader assessment process, often in the format of an intensive weekend event. The purpose is to help you continue to explore and define your call and to better equip the District to prepare you for a lifetime of effective ministry. Approach assessment experiences with openness and excitement.*

If you believe you've met the first two conditions listed above (and the third, if applicable), have a conversation with your pastor and church board about the possibility of receiving a recommendation for a District Minister's License. Normally, this will involve an interview with your local church board similar to seeking renewal of your Local Minister's License.

Depending on your progress in the Course of Study and evidence of gifts and graces for ministry, the church board may recommend you for a district license. In this case, your pastor should give you an "Application for Minister's License" along with the information you need to submit it in time to participate in the credentialing interviews held annually by your district's Board of Ministry. Normally, interviews are scheduled two to three months before district assembly. If your pastor does not provide

the form and information, contact your district office as soon as possible. To find the contact information for your district, select “District” from the menu of the USA/Canada region website (see Nazarene.org).

If the church board decides not to recommend you for a District Minister’s License, accept this as a learning opportunity and discuss with your pastor the reasons leading to this decision. This is an important time to be teachable and prayerful, trusting that God is at work in the process. Continuing in the educational process and remaining involved in local church ministry can help you, the pastor, and the church board gain a clearer sense of God’s calling and direction on your life.

### **If you or your spouse have been divorced**

If you and/or your spouse have been divorced, it is important to inform your pastor and your District Board of Ministry as early in the process as possible. The reason is that a divorce is a potential impediment to being ordained. If there is a divorce in your background, you and your spouse will be asked to meet with members of the District Board to share your story. You also will be asked to provide some documentation. In the Church of the Nazarene, this is the process through which divorce can be removed as a barrier to ordination (Manual 530.1). The aim of this process is to discern and affirm the healing and restoring work of God in your life.

Through this interview process, the District Board will make a recommendation as to whether or not your divorce should be removed as a barrier to becoming a member of the clergy (district licensing) and to the possibility of eventual ordination. This recommendation will be submitted to the Board of General Superintendents who will make the final determination on the matter. If your spouse has ever been divorced, the process is similar though the District Board will be able to approve the removal of this barrier on the part of the spouse without the need to submit the matter to the Board of General Superintendents. The only exception would be if your spouse is also seeking a District Minister’s License, in which case a recommendation to remove divorce as a barrier to becoming a member of the clergy would also have to be submitted to the Board of General Superintendents.

It is important to keep in mind that the Board of General Superintendents meets together on a limited number of occasions each year. It is not unusual for the process of removing divorce as a barrier to ordination to require 6 to 9 months from the time of your interview with your District Board to the time your district superintendent receives notification on the decision reached by the Board of General Superintendents. Be patient and trust the process as you endeavor to answer God’s calling upon your life. In the meantime, be sure to keep your Local Minister’s License in good standing by seeking its renewal and by completing the required studies. Once you have received notice that divorce has been lifted as a barrier to your becoming a member of the clergy in the Church of the Nazarene, you may proceed with the district licensing process. Upon the recommendation of the church board where you hold your membership, you will be free to interview for your District Minister’s License.

## **The district interview process**

Meeting with the District Board of Ministry is one of the most important steps in the public journey toward ordination. Once you have an interview time established with the board, make all the arrangements necessary to be there. Approach the interview prayerfully and with seriousness. The board may ask your spouse to participate in your interview for your first District Minister's License. If the board makes such a request (even in subsequent years for renewal of license), you and your spouse need to make every effort to comply. District boards conduct and structure the interviews for district licensing in a variety of ways. Regardless of the approach and schedule, be prepared for searching questions that cover such important areas as:

- Your understanding and experience of a call to ministry
  - Your understanding and experience of entire sanctification
  - Your understanding and support of the doctrinal teachings of the Church of the Nazarene
  - Your theology of ministry
  - Your financial stability and whether indebtedness could limit places where you could be assigned for ministry
  - Your willingness to work within the structures of the church
  - Your commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission
  - The overall health of your personal and family life
- Of course, your District Board of Ministry understands you are in a formative season as you gain experience in ministry and in life, and as you complete the required educational preparation. As you move through the process, the depth of the conversation during your annual interview reflects your level of progress.

## **After the interview**

Following the interview, the District Board of Ministry may recommend to the District Assembly that you be granted a District Minister's License. If you are recommended for licensing, your name will be presented to the District Assembly who then votes on the Board of Ministry recommendations. Upon approval by the district assembly, a license certificate signed by the presiding general superintendent, the district superintendent, and the district secretary, will be issued. Ideally, your pastor will present your license to you during a public worship service.

If the District Board does not recommend that you be granted a District Minister's License, this does not mean you must abandon your preparation for the ministry. It means, rather, that your pastor and local church board will continue to work with you to discern God's leading in your life, and to provide direction and guidance. If you anticipate applying for a District Minister's License in the future, it is important that you continue to hold a Local Minister's License. Work closely with your pastor on these matters. She or he will provide guidance and involve your church board appropriately.

Read the complete [Guide To Ministerial Prep and Ordination here](#)