

# CANDIDATING GUIDE

## *Now What?*

As an accredited candidate for ministry in The Alliance, what's next? To whom do I write? When do I visit a church? What happens when I actually candidate at a church? Who sets it up?

Good questions!!! Let's talk about these next steps.

### *The Process of Candidating*

1. Upon accreditation, Church Ministries will send your **ministry profile** to the districts. It is sent to all district superintendents to let them know you are accredited and available for placement in their districts upon completion of any district requirements.
2. As an accredited candidate **you must contact the district superintendents** to let them know of your interest for ministry in their districts.
  - a. Include a **cover letter** to explain your situation, time line, availability, and to request any further licensing criteria the district may have.
  - b. Enclose a **résumé**—brief, professionally done, informative—with your name, address, current phone number, e-mail address, family data, job history, education, experience in ministry, and your vision for future ministry.
  - c. Present a **statement of ministry**. This should be a one-page, three-paragraph, selective description of past, present, and future ministry.
    - Describe your ministry activities prior to college/seminary.
    - Describe your ministry activities while in college/seminary.
    - Describe the ministry activities you most look forward to in the future.
  - d. After the initial contact has been made and your résumé is in their hands, a **phone call** reminds them of your availability. Don't be a pest, but be persistent.
  - e. Seek ways to visit in person with the district superintendent.
    - Attend nearby district conferences.
    - Attend General Council.
    - Plan to stop for a visit at the district office while on vacation with your family or make a special trip.
    - Find out when the district superintendent will be in your area and set up an appointment.

### *Preparing to Candidate*

1. Always work through the district superintendent.
  - He knows the churches and church leaders in his district.
  - He will get to know you and where you might best fit.
  - He will be able to coach you through the candidating process.
  - In the C&MA, the church board calls and the district superintendent appoints the pastor.

2. The district superintendent may present you with a candidating opportunity.
3. Carefully, prayerfully, and wisely **consider every invitation**. Feel free to ask questions of the district superintendent who will be your greatest source of information and assistance. Get the information you need, evaluate the situation, pray about it, and decide as soon as possible.
4. After candidating and when a call is extended, take time to come to a clear sense of conviction to accept or decline. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, you should respond within a seven-day period.
5. Inform the district superintendent (not the church) of your decision as soon as possible.
6. Should you be contacted directly by a church, you should ask the church to contact the appropriate district superintendent to arrange candidating opportunities.
7. Be sure to define any specific parameters or conditions to the district superintendent well ahead of time such as salary minimums, medical requirements, etc.

### *The Candidating Event*

1. Sensitivity to the will of God in your life and the life of the congregation is paramount!
2. Details of scheduling, travel arrangements, and logistics of your stay will be made with the district superintendent or a governing board representative from the church. This is best done at least two weeks prior to the candidating event.
3. Prepare
  - Spiritual readiness—have a consistent, relational quiet time with the Lord.
  - Skill sharpening—prepare your message, prepare your questions, and fine-tune your people skills.
  - Knowledge base—know as much as you can about the area, the city, and the church: its origins, its leadership, its history, its vision, and its attitude.
4. Interview time! They want to get to know you. You have been accredited and approved for candidating by the National Office and/or your district. Now the church simply wants to understand for themselves who you are and how you will fit into the ministry God has built in their community. Be real!

Be prepared to talk about:

- your conversion.
- your call to ministry.
- the affirmations of your call.
- your relationship with the Holy Spirit.
- your relationship to your spouse (if applicable).
- your priorities in ministry.
- your experiences in ministry activities.

Think through what your questions might be:

- Do they consider their church a healthy, growing church?
- How many people have come to Christ in the last year?
- What is their commitment to world missions?
- How many young people have gone into ministry from this church?

- What do they want to accomplish in the next ten years?

What information do you need to help in your decision?

When appropriate, these questions may be asked of the district superintendent or the governing board:

- What is the financial commitment for outreach?
- What is the provision for the pastor and family—moving, housing, utilities, insurance, ministry transportation, etc.
- Ask for annual reports including the pastor's report for the last three years.
- Ask for church attendance figures for the last three years.

**Final tips!**

- If married, bring your spouse. Do not bring your children without an invitation.
- Arrive early to drive around the neighborhood.
- Relax and enjoy yourself!