

Licensure Information

The Church of God recognizes the following ranks of ministry: exhorter, ordained minister, and ordained bishop. Also, there are two certificates for specialized areas of ministry, which are minister of music and minister of Christian education.

With each rank and specialization come certain privileges and responsibilities proper to its function in the church. All ranks are bound by the rulings of the International General Assembly in matters of faith, practice, and polity.

The following information describes the procedure for applying for ministerial licensure or for advancement in ministerial rank.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTERIAL APPLICANTS

Applicant Must:

1. Have read entire Bible through at least once.
2. Be a faithful member, attending and tithing to local church a minimum of six months.
3. Have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with evidence of speaking in tongues.
4. If applicant or spouse has had a prior marriage, must ascertain that they meet eligibility requirements. (See further information below.)
5. Be currently active in pulpit ministry. (This item does not apply to Minister of Music or Christian Education.)
6. All applicants for the ministry, including those advancing in rank, must give consent to the state/regional office to conduct criminal background checks. The cost for the background check is \$100.00. Please make your check payable to the Illinois Church of God State Funds. After payment for one background check, a minister will not be charged for subsequent background checks.

Policy Concerning Divorce and Remarriage for Ministerial Applicants and/or Spouse

No ministerial applicant is eligible for licensure if they or their spouse have more than one living former spouse.

If a ministerial applicant or their spouse has a divorce and remarriage, with only one living former spouse, they must complete the set of Ministerial Questionnaire Concerning Divorce and Remarriage Forms. These questionnaire forms and the New Minister, Calling and Ministry Studies (CAMS), and Exhorter application be reviewed in a personal interview by the State Marital Review Committee, the applicant and their spouse. If approval is granted, the recommendation is passed on to the State Administrative Bishop, the State Council, and the General Executive Committee prior to his/her being set forth by the local church.

Once the candidate has been approved by the State Administrative Bishop, State Council, and General Executive Committee the remainder of the procedure will follow the applicable process as outlined below.

STEPS IN THE LICENSING PROCESS

EXHORTER

1. After securing the approval of the District Overseer, the Pastor or D.O. should call the Secretary to Administrative Bishop at the State Office to request the “New Minister, Calling and Ministry Studies (CAMS), and Exhorter Application”.
2. Applicant and Pastor must complete and return the “New Minister, Calling and Ministry Studies (CAMS), and Exhorter” application along with the appropriate letters of recommendation to the State Office (one letter from the applicant’s Pastor and one from the applicant’s employer).
3. After reviewing the application, if all appears to be in order, the State Office will notify the applicant of the date and location of the next Calling and Ministries Studies (CAMS) classes.
4. Applicant will be enrolled in the CAMS program.
5. Applicant and spouse (if married) must attend CAMS before proceeding with the licensure process.
6. Upon completion of the CAMS Program, the applicant will then be interviewed by the examining board chairman or board member.
7. The interview will be approximately 30 minutes in length (if married, spouse is required to attend). Interview will include the following:
 - a. Review the “New Minister, Calling and Ministry Studies (CAMS), and Exhorter Application” along with letters.
 - b. Discuss with applicant (and spouse) their personal call and commitment to “full-time” ministry.
 - c. In general, determine if applicant (and spouse) meet the requirements for ministry.
8. Following the interview, the Board chairman returns the application forms, supporting material, and the interview results to the State Office. The State Office will then notify the applicant of the approval or rejection of their application.
9. Upon receipt of the application, the State Office will send a study material order form to the applicant. Study material is then ordered by the applicant from the International Offices in Cleveland, TN.
10. The State Office will also send the “Local Church Endorsement Form” to the applicant’s District Overseer. The D.O. will then contact the applicant’s pastor to set a date for the applicant to be officially set forth (endorsed) in their local church.
11. After the applicant has been set forth by the local church, the completed endorsement form is returned to the State Office.
12. Upon receipt of the endorsement form the State Office will send the Examining Board Chairman the applicant’s testing materials. The State Office will notify the applicant of the date, time, and location of examination.
13. Examining Board Chairman returns test results to the State Office. If applicant fails the examination, the chairman will reschedule the applicant for the next testing date.
14. If applicant successfully passes the Exhorter examination, the Ministerial Exhorter Certificate will be mailed to applicant within approximately 45 days.
15. After receiving Exhorter credentials, the applicant is expected (within the next year) to enroll in the Ministerial Internship Program. Applicant must successfully complete the MIP program (or equivalent) before advancing to the rank of Ordained Minister.

MINISTER OF MUSIC OR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Same as Exhorter process, however, in addition to the Exhorter Application, a Minister of Music or Christian Education application must be completed.

MIP APPLICANTS

Applicants who are applying for the MIP. Previously, they would have completed the MIP prior to the Ordained Ministers application, but, because the two applications were merged, the Ordained Minister and MIP application is completed prior to entering MIP.

ORDAINED MINISTER

1. Upon successful completion of the MIP Program, applicant will be eligible to test for the rank of Ordained Minister.
2. Ministerial reports must be current/on time for prior six months.
3. With State Administrative Bishop's approval, the Local Church Endorsement form will be sent to set candidate forth in local church. Order form will be mailed to purchase study guide.
4. Applicant will be notified of date, time and location of examination.

ORDAINED BISHOP

1. Obtain approval of District Overseer, then contact the Secretary to Administrative Bishop at the State Office to request Ordained Bishop Application. (Ministerial reports must be current/on time for prior six months.)
2. If applicant or spouse has a divorce and remarriage history, the applicant must complete a Documentation Statement and make sure all questionnaire forms have been submitted and approved. Advancement to Ordained Bishop will require the approval of the State Administrative Bishop, State Council, General Executive Committee, and two-thirds of the Executive Council.
3. Complete application and give to Pastor (or D.O. if applicant is pastor) for his/her completion and ask that the completed application be returned to the State Office.
4. With State Administrative Bishop's approval, the Local Church Endorsement will be sent to set candidate forth in the local church. Order form will be mailed to purchase study guide.
5. Applicant will be notified of date, time and location of examination