



Metropolitan Chicago Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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GUIDELINES FOR CALLS TO MINISTRY IN SPECIAL SETTINGS

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MCS) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has four primary concerns regarding rostered leaders with calls to ministries in special settings.¹

- a) The qualifications, training and commitment of the candidate to adequately perform the ministry;
- b) The appropriateness of the setting, the mission and commitment of the employing agency, and the compatibility of the employing agency's mission with the mission of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod;
- c) The assurance of adequate support of the candidate by the employing agency;
- d) The inclusion of the candidate into the life of the synod while performing ministry in the specialized setting.

THE PROCESS

The first formal contact shall consist of the candidate's providing the following materials to the Advisory Group at the synod office.

Submission of Documentation

- 1) A statement written by the candidate which includes:
 - a) A summary of the position;
 - b) A statement of the candidate's desire to receive a call from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council;
 - c) The candidate's short and long-range vocational goals;
 - d) The candidate's understanding of the position's relationship to the ministry of the church;
 - e) The candidate's desires and intentions, regarding an ongoing relationship to the synod and membership in one of its congregations;
- 2) The completed personal data form².
- 3) Two (2) letters of recommendation attesting to the competence, qualifications and character of the candidate from other certified or ordained people serving in a similar setting.
- 4) Documentation from the prospective employer (preferably from the person who will be the candidate's immediate supervisor), including:
 - a) A copy of the position description;
 - b) A statement of the compensation package (salary and benefits) being offered;
 - c) A statement of other terms of employment, such as anticipated starting date, full or shared time service, and completion date (if the position has a set term);
 - d) A statement indicating that the candidate's qualifications for the position have been reviewed and found appropriate; and
 - e) A description of the position's lines of accountability.
- 5) Complete a background check as described in the attached memorandum.

Advisory Group Response

Upon receipt of these materials, the Advisory Group will:

- 1) Review the documents and determine if participation in a Specialized Pastoral Care endorsement is required.

¹ Refer to the ELCA Constitution, Chapter 7 for more information: www.elca.org

² A copy of the form may be found at <http://www.mcselca.org/congregation/admin/forms/index.php>

- 2) All candidates seeking a Specialized Pastoral Care (SPC) position for the first time or an SPC position in an area of specialized ministry different from the previous position must apply for Ecclesiastical Specialized Pastoral Care Endorsement through the Vocation and Education Unit of the ELCA. In any case, the candidate will be notified whether or not an endorsement is required. If endorsement is required, an Ecclesiastical Specialized Care Endorsement must be completed within one year of receiving the call.
- 3) Provide the candidate with a copy of the Synod's Guidelines for the Compensation of Pastors and Lay Professionals. At the request of the candidate, a copy of these guidelines will be sent to the prospective employer.
- 4) Review the materials provided, looking especially for their completeness and, out of concern for the rostered person, for evidence of the candidate's qualifications for the position.
- 5) If the Employing Agency is non-ELCA, the following question will be addressed: "Are the policies, goals and procedures compatible with the ELCA understanding of Mission?" If there is a question about compatibility, guidance from the ELCA Vocation and Education Unit will be sought.

Interview

The Advisory Group will arrange an interview with the candidate. At the interview, the Advisory Group will review with the candidate the materials submitted. Chief among the concerns to be addressed are the following:

- 1) The relationship of the position to the ministry of the church, including:
 - a) Whether or not the position is an expression of the church's ministry;
 - b) How the person's being a rostered professional enhances the position; and
 - c) Whether the job accountabilities are congruent with the ministry of a rostered person of the ELCA.
 - d) The candidate's preparation and qualifications for the position.
 - e) In the case of an ordained minister, the pastor's completion of the three years of parish service as required by the ELCA Constitution (7.41.12).
 - f) In the case of a shared-time position, the position's meeting the ELCA Vocation and Education Unit requirement of a minimum of twenty hours per week.
 - g) The extent of the position's responsibilities and duties, the adequacy of its salary and benefits, and the clarity of its stated accountability.
 - h) The process of performance review and professional support within the employing agency.
 - i) The legal and financial responsibility of the employing agency for professional liability.
 - j) Ways in which the candidate will be involved in the life of the synod and accountable to it on an ongoing basis.
 - k) Ways in which the synod can support the candidate.
 - l) Ways in which the candidate will relate to the congregation in which he or she holds membership.

Normally, once the interview has been held, the advisory group will formulate a recommendation, share it with the candidate, and submit it to the Synod Council.

Post Interview

If the Synod Council issues a letter of call or appointment and the candidate accepts, the advisory group will undertake these tasks of follow-up:

- 1) To notify the dean of the conference on whose territory the candidate will be serving.
- 2) To encourage the appropriate associate to the bishop to be in contact with the candidate, regarding the planning of a service of installation.
- 3) To notify the ELCA's Director of Specialized Pastoral Care and Clinical Education.

Approval of Employing Agency

Prior to or during the interview with the candidate the advisory group may request that the employing agency be subject to a review and evaluation as to the suitability of the specialized ministry. When a review is deemed necessary, the following procedure will be used:

- 1) The employing agency, acting on its own or the candidate acting on behalf of the employing agency shall submit:
 - a) A copy of the employing agency's mission statement;
 - b) The agency's policies and procedures;

- c) A statement setting forth how the mission of the ELCA and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod relate to and complement its mission, policies and procedures;
 - d) An organizational chart showing the relative levels of all specialized ministry positions in the decision making process;
 - e) A statement regarding continuing education policies;
 - f) A statement regarding time provided to attend synodical meetings and to participate in synodical and churchwide committees;
 - g) A statement regarding opportunities provided to conduct or participate in worship service;
 - h) An explanation of the performance reviews of the position including the composition of the review panel. It is expected that an authorized representative of the bishop would be allowed to read the review report.
- 2) The candidate having become familiar with the Employing Agency, shall submit the following documentation:
- a) A statement setting forth, as specifically as possible, the ways and means by which the candidate's implementation of the Employing Agency's mission will complement or supplement the mission of the ELCA and the synod;
 - b) An explanation of how ordination or certification enhances or is vital to the specialized ministry position; and
 - c) A statement regarding the support of the candidate's professional standing through allowing time and financial support to attend meetings of the credentialing organization.
 - d) The candidate shall submit a statement setting forth proposed commitment to Word and Sacrament Ministry both in employment, and in a local ELCA congregation or congregations.

Upon receipt and review of the required documents, a representative(s) of the synod staff and/or the advisory group may visit the employing agency headquarters and/or the site where the specialized ministry will be performed. This visit will include a meeting with a representative of the employing agency or a person to whom the candidate is accountable.

At any time in the process the advisory group may request supplemental information beyond that called for in this document.

Questions about this process may be addressed to:

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