

NJMN CREDENTIALING GUIDE

A GUIDE TO AG CREDENTIALS

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Welcome!

This Credentialing Guide is to help those who sense a sacred call on their lives to ministry. We are so excited if God has been speaking to you regarding this holy call. We are honored to assist you on this holy journey. We want to help you succeed and live a life of significance. We are here to help you take a natural step in ministry: Minister Credentials. The sacred call to ministry is from God. The credential is our response to honor and validate God's call. This Guide is to specifically help those who are inquiring about ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God in New Jersey.

1 Timothy 4:14-16 gives us some insight to this journey:

- Don't neglect your gift or call.
- Spiritual elders help us on the journey.
- We are called to grow and progress in our call.
- Take heed to yourself – watch your life. The first person you always lead is you.
- Watch your doctrine.
- When you do these things, you will save yourself and those who follow you.

Your credentialing journey and the people you connect with on the journey, will help you in these areas. You become a part of a family and community of ministers who will help you move forward in your call and ministry. A credential is more than a piece of paper. It is proof that you have done the due diligence necessary to touch the eternal destinies of human beings. Just like you want to know your doctor's competence (you see his/her credentials on the wall), others' minds will be placed at ease when they know of your sacred competence.

This is what God says about those of us with a sacred call to spiritual leadership (Jeremiah 1:5): **"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you** – God formed you. But before you were ever in your mother's womb – before your mom was pregnant with you – God knew you. He envisioned you.

"Before you were born I set you apart – Before you came out of your mother's womb, you were already set apart by God. Most of us try to fit in. But God said, "I set you apart." The reason you might haven't fit in some of your life is that God set you apart. God meant for you to be different.

"I appointed you as a prophet to the nations – God appoints spiritual leaders. So, fulfill the holy call that's on your life. God initiated your holy call, so your possibilities are limitless!

God calls us to be equipped and recognized by spiritual elders and leaders (1 Timothy 4:14-16; Ephesians 4:11-15). Ministerial credentials help you get ahead of the curve of inexperience.

"Inexperienced soldiers not only get themselves killed but endanger others. Inadequately trained personnel do not simply dilute the effectiveness of an organization; they actively reduce it, because their uncertainty and their mistakes require labor to fix – if they can be fixed." Alan Axelrod, *Eisenhower on Leadership*, 161.

Review the rest of the credentialing information in this manual. We look forward to partnering with you. Thank you for trusting us on your holy journey. If you have any questions, please contact us at: credentialing@njag.org or 609.747.7878, ext. 2020. God bless you! Your friend, Frank Reitzel, Jr.

"...If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position." 1 Timothy 3:1 NLT

___ Check here when you have read the Credentialing Guide entirely. When you have read the Credentialing Guide, and when you are clear and clean on steps 1 and 2 of page 4 of "Follow Your Call", your next step is to fill out the pre-application on the website.

ABOUT MINISTRY:

Christ's gifts to the Church include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11), exhorters, administrators, leaders, and helpers (Romans 12:7–8). We understand God's call to these ministry gifts is totally within His sovereign discretion without regard to gender, race, disability, or national origin.

Three classifications of ministry are recognized and transferable among all Assemblies of God districts and networks in the United States: the ordained minister, the licensed minister, and the certified minister. All ordained, licensed, and certified ministers holding current ministerial credentials are authorized to perform the ordinances and ceremonies (sacerdotal functions) of the church.

- The first level of credential is the Certified Credential. Generally, this is when you have a call from God to go into the ministry, you have some sacred education, but you don't have any ministry experience or very little ministry experience. That's ok. You need to start somewhere.
- The next level of credential is the License Credential. On this level, you have a call from God into the ministry, your sacred education is more robust, and you have ministry experience. In fact, you are doing some kind of ministry right now.
- The highest level of credentialing in the Assemblies of God is ordination. This is where you have quite a bit of sacred education, your ministry is proven and seasoned. The elders of the church have seen it. You don't initiate this level. This level is initiated by our Network Presbytery of elders in New Jersey.

To summarize, we *Certify* a call from God, *License* a call with ministry experience, and *Ordain* a call with proven ministry.

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR MINISTER CREDENTIALS:

The following qualifications pertain to all applicants for ministerial recognition:

- **Salvation.** Testimony to having experienced the new birth (John 3:5).
- **Baptism in the Holy Spirit.** Testimony to having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues according to Acts 2:4. The Spirit-filled life will enable a minister to fulfill the fourfold mission of the church (Constitution, Article V, paragraph 10).
- **Evidence of call.** Clear evidence of a divine call to the ministry, evidenced by a personal conviction, confirmed by the work of the Spirit and the testimony of fellow ministers.
- **Christian character.** A blameless Christian life and a good report of those who are without (Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:7).
- **Doctrinal position.** A thorough understanding of and agreement with our doctrinal position as contained in the Statement of Fundamental Truths. (Please see page 9.)
- **Assemblies of God polity.** A satisfactory working knowledge of the principles, practices, and purposes of the Fellowship through a study of the General Council and district council Constitution and Bylaws. (We have help for you for this.)
- **Voluntary cooperation and commitment to the Fellowship.** An active loyalty to our constitutional agreements, a cooperative spirit, and a readiness to seek and receive the counsel of older mature Christians and those in positions of authority.

By voluntary it is meant that, upon learning the principles, doctrines, and practices of the Assemblies of God, and by seeing the benefits to be derived from being associated with such an organization, persons of their own free choice decide to become members, thus subscribing to all that for which the organization stands.

For the minister, by cooperation, it is meant, to the best of one's ability, complying with all decisions setting forth and defining duties and responsibilities incumbent upon members of the organization. It includes active participation and respect.

BASIC EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:

The General Council of the Assemblies of God has established specific education requirements for ministers at each credential level (Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2). All applicants must successfully complete sacred education courses prescribed by the General Presbytery,

- Offered in correspondence through Global University of the Assemblies of God (see page 5-7);
- Or successfully complete equivalent training in an endorsed Assemblies of God postsecondary school; or in a seminary, college, Bible college, or school approved by the district credentials committee consistent with criteria established by the General Council Credentials Committee (see page 8).

All applicants are required to be interviewed by the district credentials committee and, in preparation for the interview, pass a standard exam approved by the General Presbytery whereby they demonstrate knowledge of the Bible, Assemblies of God doctrines, and ministerial practices.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

• Assemblies of God Colleges or Universities

For a list of endorsed Assemblies of God colleges or universities, visit <https://colleges.ag.org/>. Graduates from one of these institutions with a biblical studies, ministerial studies, or other church-related degree or nongraduates who have the required number of hours (see below) for their credential level (including 24 hours in Bible/Theology) will not be required to complete “AG History, Missions, and Governance”, “Introduction to Pentecostal Doctrine” and “Relationships and Ethics in Ministry.”

If the applicant does not have the required number of hours for their credential level and/or has fewer than 24 hours in Bible/Theology, a course-by-course comparison will be necessary. The applicant will need to complete missing courses for the credential level they are applying for, including “AG History, Missions and Governance”, “Introduction to Pentecostal Doctrine” and “Relationships and Ethics in Ministry.”

Graduates from an endorsed Assemblies of God college or university automatically qualify for a Certificate of Ministry (Certified) credential, even if they do not have 24 hours of Bible/Theology or a major in Bible/Theology or church ministries.

Applicants who attended but did not graduate from an endorsed Assemblies of God college or university who did not major in Bible/Theology or church ministries will need to have at least 24 hours of Bible/Theology, along with required number of hours per credential level (see below).

• Non-Assemblies of God Colleges or Universities

If you have completed a program of study at a non-Assemblies of God reputable Christian college or Bible School, you will be required to take at least three courses from Global University/Berean: “AG History, Missions and Governance”, “Introduction to Pentecostal Doctrine” and “Relationships and Ethics in Ministry.” Additional courses may be required, especially if the college or university is not Pentecostal in doctrine.

Required Number of Credit Hours in an Assemblies of God College or University or another Accredited Christian College or University:

- Certified Credential – 2 years (48 hours)
- Licensed Credential – 3 years (72 hours)
- Ordained Credential – 4 years (96 hours)
- At least 24 hours in Bible/Theology

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

COURSES APPROVED BY THE GENERAL PRESBYTERY AND OFFERED THROUGH:
GLOBAL UNIVERSITY, BEREAN SCHOOL OF THE: BIBLE [HTTPS://GLOBALUNIVERSITY.EDU/](https://globaluniversity.edu/)

BELOW ARE COURSES USED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS::

PHASE I - CERTIFIED MINISTER

1

BIB 114- CHRIST IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

2

BIB 121- INTRODUCTION TO HERMENEUTICS: HOW TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE

3

MIN 181- RELATIONSHIPS AND ETHICS IN MINISTRY

4

THE 114- INTRODUCTION TO PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINE

5

THE 142- ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HISTORY, MISSIONS AND GOVERNANCE

6

MIN 171- A SPIRIT- EMPOWERED CHURCH: AN ACTS 2 MINISTRY MODEL

7

THE 211- INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY: A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

8

BIB 214- OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

9

BIB 212- NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

10

MIN 191- BEGINNING MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

COURSES APPROVED BY THE GENERAL PRESBYTERY AND OFFERED THROUGH:
GLOBAL UNIVERSITY, BEREAN SCHOOL OF THE: BIBLE [HTTPS://GLOBALUNIVERSITY.EDU/](https://globaluniversity.edu/)

BELOW ARE COURSES USED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS::

PHASE II - LICENSED MINISTER

11

BIB 115- ACTS: THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN BELIEVERS

12

BIB 117- PRISON EPISTLES: EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS, PHILIPPIANS, AND PHILEMON

13

MIN 123- THE LOCAL CHURCH IN EVANGELISM

14

BIB 215- ROMANS: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

15

MIN 223- INTRODUCTION TO HOMILETICS

16

MIN 251- EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

17

MIN 261- INTRODUCTION TO ASSEMBLIES OF GOD MISSIONS

18

MIN 281- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR CHURCH LEADERS

19

THE 245- ESCHATOLOGY: A STUDY OF THINGS TO COME

20

MIN 291- INTERMEDIATE MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

COURSES APPROVED BY THE GENERAL PRESBYTERY AND OFFERED THROUGH:
GLOBAL UNIVERSITY, BEREAN SCHOOL OF THE: BIBLE [HTTPS://GLOBALUNIVERSITY.EDU/](https://globaluniversity.edu/)

BELOW ARE COURSES USED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS::

PHASE III - ORDAINED MINISTER

21 BIB 313- THE CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

22 BIB 318- THE PENTATEUCH

23 BIB 322- THE POETIC BOOKS

24 MIN 325- PREACHING IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

25 MIN 327- CHURCH ADMINISTRATION, LAW AND FINANCE

26 MIN 381- PASTORAL MINISTRY

27 THE 311- PRAYER AND WORSHIP

28 MIN 391- ADVANCED MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP

MARITAL STATUS

Any applicant, or their spouse, who has a former spouse living, cannot hold credentials unless the divorce is recognized under one of the following biblical categories:

- Preconversion divorce (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15)
- Spousal infidelity (Matthew 19:9)
- Domestic violence by a spouse to a spouse or child (Matthew 18:6; Ephesians 5:28-33; Colossians 3:19)
- Ecclesiastical annulment – a pronouncement declaring a marriage invalid as hereinafter provided. In such cases there must be clear and satisfactory evidence of deception or fraud, unknown to the applicant at the time of marriage. Additionally, the lack of consummation or other conditions which have a profound impact preventing the creation of a valid marriage union can constitute an ecclesiastical annulment.

A divorce application must be completed by anyone who has a former spouse who is still living and falls into one of the following categories:

- Someone who intends to apply for ministerial credentials
- Spouse of applicant for ministerial credentials
- Someone contemplating marriage to an applicant for credentials

Each case requiring a recognition of divorce or ecclesiastical annulment shall be decided by the Executive Presbytery of the General Council of the Assemblies of God on an individual basis as to whether the termination of the marriage is consistent with the scriptural position of the Fellowship relating to the granting or holding of ministerial credentials. Legal documents of the divorce, a letter of recommendation from the current pastor, along with letters of corroboration are required.

RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

All credential holders are expected to affiliate with the district council/network within the boundaries of which they reside and work.

FINANCIAL INVESTMENT AND COMMITMENT

The application process costs are an investment into your sacred call and ministry. Your application package cost investment will be \$125. (This includes the cost of a background and credit check.) If you need to take the divorce and remarriage path, it will cost another \$125.

A New Jersey credentialed minister of the Assemblies of God gives $\frac{3}{4}$ of their sacred tithes to the New Jersey Ministry Network. Dues to the General Council of the Assemblies of God is \$10 a month for certified ministers, \$20 a month for licensed ministers, and \$25 a month for ordained ministers.

CREDENTIAL RENEWALS

Credentials are renewed annually beginning in the month of November. The deadline for annual credential renewals are December 31 for each year. You can still renew until January 15, but you will incur a late fee of \$25 payable to the General Council and \$25 payable to the New Jersey Ministry Network (NJMN). Ministers who have not renewed on or before January 15 will be recorded as a lapsed minister (you have no credential). Credential renewals are completed online at <https://ministerrenewal.ag.org/>.

BACKGROUND CHECK/PERSONAL FINANCES

Every level of credential requires an up-to-date background and credit check. Please make sure any past due bills are paid or have a creditor approved repayment plan for outstanding debt. This step tends to slow down the credentialing process for some.

CREDENTIAL EXAMS

The Certified Credential requires two exams: Doctrine and Bible. The Licensed Credential requires Doctrine, Bible and Polity exams. The Polity exam is the most difficult for many. Please study well for it. Each exam has a study guide that can be found on the njag.org website in the credentialing part of the site. There are no exams for ordination.

CREDENTIALING INTERVIEW

All levels of credentials require interviews with the applicant and their spouse (if applicable). Ministry, doctrinal, and other questions may be asked of you.

DISTRICT AND GENERAL COUNCIL APPROVAL

The New Jersey Ministry Network Presbytery is the Credentialing Committee for the Network. The presbytery meets four times a year in person and twice by Zoom. There are deadlines for credential applications that need to be met with the Network and National Offices. Please make sure you move forward daily in your application process. The time to complete your credential application package lies mainly with you. If you have any questions, please contact us.

CREDENTIALS GRANTED

Assemblies of God credential approval lies ultimately with the General Council of the Assemblies of God. The New Jersey Ministry Network makes recommendations to the General Council. But the final authority rests with the General Council Credentials Committee.

DOCUMENTS YOU NEED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH – FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR EXAMS:

- <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths>
- <https://ag.org/About/About-the-AG/Constitution-and-Bylaws>

REINSTATEMENT OF CREDENTIALS

Those who desire to reinstate their credential will need to fill out the “Reinstatement of Credential” request form on the website. When approved, a pre-application will be sent to you. (“Follow Your Call – Steps Toward a Credential Upgrade to License with the Assemblies of God”) will help you step-by-step through the process (See page 11)

TRANSFER OF CREDENTIALS

To transfer your credential to another Assemblies of God District or Network, please call or e-mail the office to request the “Information Needed for Transfer” document. After completing, you will e-mail to credentialing@njag.org. The Network Executive Secretary’s office will issue the transfer unless there are charges pending against the minister. Transfers are expected to take place within 60 days of taking up residence in the new district/network. Exceptions for transfers can be found in the General Council Bylaws, Article VII, Section 9.

UPGRADE TO LICENSE

If you desire to upgrade your credential from Certified to License, this page, (“Follow Your Call – Steps Toward a Credential Upgrade to License with the Assemblies of God”) will help you step-by-step through the process (See page 12). Please review pages 5-8 regarding sacred education requirements.

UPGRADE TO ORDINATION

The right of initiative in requests for ordination are placed in the hands of the New Jersey Ministry Network Presbytery. Applicants do not make the decision to move forward to this level. It is, however, suggested, that the applicant introduce themselves and the ministry entrusted to them, to the presbyter of their section and fellowship (if applicable for Fellowships). The presbytery (the elders of the New Jersey Ministry Network) watches the lives and ministries of credential holders. When the credential holder’s character and integrity are proven, along with the ministry entrusted to them, the Presbytery initiates the first step. Other steps are required by General Council and New Jersey Ministry Network bylaws including: sacred education, pastoral approval, and the faithful giving of the sacred tithe