

EXPLORING CANDIDATE INTRODUCTORY INTERVIEW WITH DS (§310.1B)

For the interviewer: The key question you are trying to answer for yourself is:
“Does this person articulate a God call and basic fitness for ministry?”

Requirements Prior to Interview

1. A professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one year.
2. Conversation(s) with local church pastor about the authenticity of their call by God to set-apart ministry.
3. Letter or email from local church pastor recommending the candidate for an exploratory conversation with the district superintendent.

Statement of Purpose

One of the key “first steps” in the candidacy process happens when the district superintendent meets with an inquiring candidate for the following purposes: 1) To hear their sense of call, 2) To inquire about their leadership experience in the local church, and 3) To make an initial assessment regarding their basic fitness for ministry in the UMC. The DS must approve before the inquiring candidate can enroll in our ministry candidacy process.

At the outset, this meeting has the potential to set the tone for our entire candidacy process. That strongly implies that the questions asked by the district superintendent and the conversation that takes place should be consistent with expectations for fruitfulness/effectiveness and be in alignment with the mission and values of our Annual Conference. From the very beginning the DS can affirm that ministry is not about meeting the needs of the candidate but about serving the mission and purposes of Christ.

Best Practices

- When possible, have a conversation with the sending local church pastor prior to your meeting with the candidate. What are the pastor’s impressions about the candidate’s leadership potential? How well is the candidate respected in the local church? What experience does the candidate have in leading others? Get a sense of the pastor’s overall impression about this candidate’s promise and potential. Has the person been a member of the UMC for at least one year?
- In conversation with the candidate, make clear that we are seeking leaders who are passionate about making disciples and are already actively engaged in the actual practice of ministry.
- With the DS’s discretion, there may be a need for multiple visits with the prospective candidate before handing out the candidacy packet.
- The DS or a representative of the DS should respond within 48 hours of the prospective candidate’s initial contact to meet with the DS. The time and date of the meeting can be set as the DS’s schedule allows.

Suggested Questions

1. Tell me about how God has brought you here today. I'd like to hear about your spiritual journey and your sense of call. What has drawn you toward ministry?
2. What have been some of your specific leadership experiences in the life of the church or in your ministry setting? What results came from your leadership? What was most challenging? What was most formative and fulfilling? What did you learn about yourself? (This would be an ideal time to ask the "Tell me about a time when..." questions.)
3. What character(s) or stories from the Bible do you identify with? Why?
4. How have your family and friends encountered your sense of call?
5. What are the spiritual disciplines that keep you grounded and growing in Christ? Tell me about your worship and personal devotional life.
6. What are some of the ways that you care for yourself physically, relationally, spiritually and emotionally?
7. How will you process the possibility of God calling you to leave the security of your career, job, school, etc.? How will it impact your life? Your family?
8. What does it mean for you to be "called"? As you think of following your sense of call from God, what does that look like to you? What steps are you taking to pursue living into that vision? (This would be a good time to explain the basics of the ministry candidacy process and how the DS and dCOM is here to guide and support).
9. If approved to enter the candidacy process, you will be required to undergo a background check which includes financial and felony components as well as psychological testing. We want you to be aware that these are required.

Action Required

- No vote is required.
- If proceeding, DS should enroll candidate in UMCARES, share the background packet, and share Candidacy Summit dates and registration information.
- If not proceeding, DS should articulate if and under what circumstances the candidate might be able to proceed (or not at all).

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District: _____ Date: _____

Candidate: _____

Candidate's Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Highest level of education (check one):

- GED High School Diploma Undergrad (Years completed: _____)
- Master of Divinity (Years completed: _____)
- Master of Theology Studies (Years completed: _____) D. Min. Th. D. Ph. D.

Name of School (if attending): _____

Names of Interview Team:

The DS took the following action regarding the person listed above (check all that apply):

- Recommended for enrollment into candidacy program/UMCARES
- Not Recommended for enrollment into candidacy program/UMCARES

Interview Summary:

Notes, Recommendations or Requirements for follow-up: