

A Quick Guide from the North Central District

What is a Credential?

A ministerial credential represents the collective affirmation of the EFCA that a pastor or ministry leader is a person of spiritual and personal integrity, Biblical-theological understanding, and ministerial competence. It is a modern-day expression of the Biblical pattern of commending leaders to Christ's church (Rom. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:18-24; Phil. 2:19-22; 3 John 12).

What Credentials Does the EFCA Offer?

EFCA ministerial credentialing begins with licensing and can be continued with the optional step of the Certificate of Christian Ministry or the Certificate of Ordination. The EFCA website has complete information available on [all aspects of credentialing](#).

Why Obtain a Credential?

A vigorous rationale for pursuing a ministry credential includes the following reasons:

- It is good for the pastor/leader! It provides a well-defined but manageable pathway for further personal development in Biblical-theological understanding and ministry application. It's an opportunity for personal nourishment, refreshment, and invigoration.
- It is good for the church! The church will be enriched by the spillover from a pastor or ministry leader who is being nourished and stimulated in this way.
- It is a way of modeling for others the kind of commitment and "joining" that leaders want their congregations to do.
- It is a way of affirming partnership and accountability with the EFCA and of being encouraged by the affirmation of the EFCA.
- It is the best way to satisfy legal requirements for performing marriages in Minnesota and to satisfy the IRS' requirement (among others) that a minister be licensed, commissioned or ordained to be eligible for ministerial tax treatment.

Credentials and Eligibility

Present engagement in a qualifying ministry is necessary to be eligible for a credential. Most ministry staff positions are eligible. Positions whose responsibilities are mainly administrative or operational are not eligible. If in doubt, contact our office for clarification.

The Pathway

The three main tasks in preparing for the standard license are the reading of five books, the completion of a variety of application paperwork, and the writing of a doctrinal paper. This is followed by an examination council, usually online, with three or four members of our district credentialing network. Information on each of these elements of the pathway is available [on the EFCA website](#).

You can work on the above tasks in any order. Submit your paperwork to the [national credentialing platform](#) as you complete each element. It must be submitted before your licensing council can be scheduled.

We will look over your paper for formatting and then send it to a first reader (an EFCA-ordained pastor) from the district credentialing network for review. He will contact you with suggestions or required revisions to the paper. Once the reader signs off on the paper, we can schedule your virtual licensing council - an informal but focused time with three to five EFCA-credentialed individuals who will go over your paper with you to confirm your basic theological competence and your alignment with the EFCA.

Application Forms

You must fill out several forms of various sorts. These are available for filling out and submitting [on the EFCA website](#). You and your spouse/friend and your church elders will also fill out questionnaires on your spiritual and character qualifications. (You and your spouse/friend can choose a personal interview as an alternative if you prefer.) You must also furnish information so that, in compliance with Minnesota state law, we can check on your previous employment relative to sexual integrity. This information [can be found here](#).

Contact [Sharon Trucker](#) on the North Central District staff to discuss questions you may have.