

## EFCA Credentialing through the Eastern District

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The following FAQs will help you see at a glance what EFCA credentialing is all about. For complete details, download [Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA](#), the EFCA credentialing policy on the national EFCA website. On that site, look at each of the blue icons, but pay particular attention to the Documents and Forms page. Download the document for the credential you are pursuing. It will give you directions for applying and writing the paper and the documents that must be submitted to the [Eastern District office](#).

### What does credentialing involve?

If not already ordained by another denomination, a candidate must start with the [Ministry License](#). If already ordained in a non-EFC church, the candidate can proceed to the [Transfer of Ordination](#).

While credentials are granted by the national EFCA, the process is completed at the district level. Please contact the Eastern District office ([office@edaefca.org](mailto:office@edaefca.org)) with any questions and to let us know of your desire to be credentialed.

The EFCA offers four ministerial credentials:

- The [Ministry License](#) (*Vocational or Non-Vocational*, depending on the nature of one's ministry) is renewable every five years as long as one is serving in accordance with EFCA standards.
- Three years after licensing, the [Certificate of Ordination](#) or the [Certificate of Christian Ministry](#) can be pursued, if desired. The *Certificate of Ordination* is designed primarily, though not exclusively, for those in full-time ministry directly teaching the Word of God. It is granted to males only. The *Certificate of Christian Ministry* is designed for a wide variety of ministry roles.
- [Transfer of Ordination](#) is for those who have already been ordained by another denomination or church and have their written paper and council notes. Requirements are the same as for Ordination, but the previous paper can be adapted to meet EFCA requirements.

### What specific work is required?

Summary of [Ministry License](#) Requirements

- Paperwork (Letter of Intent; Application; Minister's Profile; Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications ([PSCQ](#)) questionnaires for the candidate, spouse or friend, and elders; Reading Affidavit; and transcripts, if applicable), submitted to the [Eastern District office](#).
- One-time \$50 credentialing fee, payable by check or online to the [Eastern District](#).
- Reading five books about EFCA history, beliefs, and practices (see the Reading Affidavit).
- Observing a licensing council prior to your own.
- Doctrinal-biographical paper (15-20 pages).
- Successful completion of an examination by the District Board of Ministerial Standing.

Summary of [Certificate of Ordination](#) OR [Certificate of Christian Ministry](#) Requirements

- Prerequisite: EFCA Ministry License.

- Paperwork (new Letter of Intent, Application, Minister's Profile, Church Recommendation AND Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications ([PSCQ](#)) questionnaires for the candidate, spouse or friend, and elders; transcripts, if applicable).
- Doctrinal-biographical paper, expanding the licensing paper based on further study, reflection, growth, and interaction during the licensing period (25-30 pages for a Certificate of Christian Ministry; 35-40 pages for a Certificate of Ordination).
- Observing an ordination council prior to your own.
- Successful completion of an examination by the District Board of Ministerial Standing.

## Who is eligible?

You must be a member of an EFCA church and engaged in a qualifying vocational or bi-vocational ministry. (An exception to this is the Non-vocational Ministry License, for those serving in a non-vocational ministry that requires a credential to serve in that ministry.) Men in qualifying ministries are eligible for the Ministry License and Certificate of Ordination; men and women in qualifying ministries are eligible for the Ministry License and Certificate of Christian Ministry.

## What is a qualifying ministry?

Generally it is a ministry within the EFCA or approved by the national Board of Ministerial Standing. Non-EFCA ministries are considered on a case-by-case basis.

## On what basis does the EFCA evaluate an individual's fitness for credentialing?

- Call to ministry (a church or qualifying ministry has called you to be a pastor or chaplain).
- Personal character, integrity, and ministerial capability, as shown in the [Policy for Spiritual and Character Qualifications Questionnaires](#) (PSCQ). Ordination requires an additional Church Recommendation.
- Competence in Biblical-theological understanding, as demonstrated in the paper and council examination.

## Is there an educational requirement?

The basic requirement for licensing is preparation that produces appropriate theological *understanding and alignment* with the EFCA, as demonstrated in your paper and your oral examination. Some who have had no formal Bible College or seminary training go through the EFCA GATEWAY training. A diploma from GATEWAY or other theological training is recommended, but not required. The Certificate of Christian Ministry requires the demonstration of theological *competency*. The Certificate of Ordination requires the demonstration of theological *proficiency*. Preparation for these requirements could take the form of formal or non-formal education and training, but should reflect the equivalency of a Master of Divinity degree.

## Will obtaining a credential help me obtain tax benefits?

Please understand that credentialing is not *primarily* a means to obtain ministerial tax status with the IRS or recognition by the State in which you live to perform marriages. While an

EFCA credential may help you to qualify for these things, we ask you to view credentialing as an opportunity for public affirmation of your integrity and competence in ministry, an opportunity for personal growth, and development to that end. (Note: regarding the relationship between an EFCA ministerial credential and IRS tax treatment, you need to consult expert advice from tax accountants in the state in which you live or helpful manuals such as [Zondervan Minister's Tax and Financial Guide](#) by Dan Busby, J. Michael Martin, and John VanDrunen.)

## **Can women be credentialed in the EFCA?**

Yes. They are eligible for the Ministry License and for the Certificate of Christian Ministry. They are not eligible for Ordination.

## **What if I'm not yet in a qualifying ministry? Is there something I can do?**

If you anticipate entering a qualifying ministry soon, you can begin working on the requirements for the Ministry License. You can also participate in a licensing study group (see below).

## **Can I transfer my credential to the EFCA?**

If you are licensed, but not ordained, with another denomination or church, you must begin with the EFCA Ministry License. If you are ordained with another denomination or church, and that ordination process involved a substantive paper and a formal examination council, you are likely eligible to transfer your ordination to the EFCA. That process is largely the same as for the Certificate of Ordination, except that you do not have to complete the Ministry License, and you may not have to write an entirely new paper. See [EFCA Transfer of Ordination](#) or contact the [Eastern District office](#) to determine eligibility.

## **What resources are available to help me?**

The EFCA has [self-study notes](#) that can help you in a personal regimen of preparation and development. If you desire a [credentialing mentor](#), contact the [Eastern District office](#). If available, you can join a credentialing study group. These groups meet in various locations and are led by EFCA-ordained pastors to discuss the theological themes of the Statement of Faith and apply them to life and ministry, thus helping individuals prepare for licensing and certification. Contact the [Eastern District office](#) to inquire about group availability.

## **What are my first steps?**

- Download [Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA](#) for all the forms and resources you need for the credential you desire.
- Contact the [Eastern District office](#) to let us know of your intent so we can track with you and answer questions you may have. We will create a file for you that we will send to the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing for final approval once your process is complete.
- **Work at your own pace** on the application forms, book reading, and writing your paper. These can be done and submitted to the Eastern District office in any order.
- **Observe a credentialing council** prior to your own.

- **Schedule your council** once your paper is complete and accepted by the Eastern District office. At that point a council date for your examination will be approved.