

Your Guide to Ministry Credentials in the Rocky Mountain District

We are pleased that you are interested in pursuing ministry credentials with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

The purpose of a ministerial credential is to:

- *Confirm God's call upon your life*
- *Verify that you meet the qualifications and standards for ministry in the EFCA*
- *Affirm you for ministerial service under the auspices of the EFCA*
- *Provide legal status for the exercise of your ministry*

Having an EFCA credential is a significant step in clarifying God's call on your life and gives assurance to you and to your congregation that you not only understand the doctrines and policies of the EFCA, but that you also affirm and meet these expectations. When credentialed, you will receive public affirmation that you are approved for ministry in an EFCA local church.

For many new pastors and for those who transfer into the EFCA, it may seem like a daunting task, but we believe that the process of becoming fully credentialed will be more than worth the effort and will allow you to serve more effectively in the EFCA.

Getting started!

1. Identify the Appropriate Credential for You.

The first step is to visit the credentialing page of the EFCA, (<https://credentialing.ministries.efca.org>) and determine which credential is the right one for you to pursue at this time. Several credentials with different qualifications and requirements are offered. Please note that each is intended for Christian leaders already serving in qualifying ministries. Do not miss the FAQ section, which is extremely helpful.

Download the document for the credential you are pursuing. It will give you directions for applying and writing your paper, as well as provide the documents that must be submitted to the Rocky Mountain District office.

If not already ordained by another denomination, a candidate must start with the Ministry License. If you are ordained with another denomination or church, and that ordination process involved a compatible paper and a formal examination council, you are likely eligible to transfer your ordination to the EFCA. The process for a Transfer of Ordination 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.

Please note that while credentials are granted by the national EFCA, the process is completed at the district level. If you need help determining which credential is the appropriate one for you to pursue at this time, the District Superintendent or the Chairman of the District Board of Ministerial Standing would be happy to assist you.

Who is eligible?

You must be a member of an EFCA church and engaged in a qualifying vocational or bi-vocational ministry. Men in qualifying ministries are eligible for the Ministry License and Certificate of Ordination, while both men and women in qualifying ministries are eligible for the Ministry License and Certificate of Christian Ministry. The license is the required credential for anyone pursuing further credentialing in the EFCA. It is intended, first and foremost, for those directly involved in local church ministry of teaching and preaching the Word and, secondly, for those who are indirectly involved in the ministry of teaching and preaching the Word, who engage in a ministry that is supportive of the ministry of the Word.

Can women be credentialed in the EFCA?

Yes. They are eligible for the Ministry License and for the Certificate of Christian Ministry. However, the Certificate of Ordination is reserved for men who serve in a qualifying ministry as per the EFCA complementarian conviction.

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, chaplain, or ministry leader in accordance with eligibility).
- 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.

2. Apply for Your Credential.

Download the informational packet for the appropriate credential from the EFCA website (<https://helps.efca.org/bundles/credentialing-documents-and-forms>) and begin to complete and send the required application materials to the District Office, including a letter indicating your desire and reasons for wanting an EFCA credential.

Email these application materials (as you finish them or all together) to:
Barry Vegter, District Superintendent, Rocky Mountain District, pbvegter@gmail.com

The district office will create a file for you and help you track your progress. The office will also communicate to the District Board of Ministerial Standing Chairman that your paperwork has been received.

Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications (PSCQ).

See also <https://credentialing.ministries.efca.org/policy-on-spiritual-and-character-qualifications>

Those seeking their first credential with the EFCA will need to either complete a PSCQ questionnaire or participate in an optional personal PSCQ interview(s). In the Rocky Mountain District, our superintendent is tasked with handling these confidential matters. Any written PSCQ questionnaires should be mailed or emailed directly to:

Barry Vegter, pbvegter@gmail.com
Rocky Mountain District – EFCA
8089 Sandsmere Drive
Colorado Springs CO 80908

Superintendent Vegter will communicate to the credentialing office that the PSCQ policy has been fulfilled when the process is complete.

3. Write Your Paper.

The next step is to write a paper that demonstrates your level of theological proficiency and doctrinal alignment with the EFCA.

- Download and carefully follow the paper requirements for the credential you are pursuing. The EFCA provides a comprehensive set of guidelines that must be closely adhered to. In addition, the Rocky Mountain District has some additional requirements.
- 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 Mark Vaporis, (mvaporis@gmail.com) and he will attempt to pair you with someone to help you through the process of writing your paper. 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 contained in the Statement of Faith and apply them to life and ministry, thus helping individuals prepare for licensing and certification.
- It is recommended that you set a schedule for yourself that divides the work into achievable sections. It is best to have one or two individuals well versed in English composition and theology review your paper before submission.

- Write your paper with Microsoft Word to help ensure the correct formatting requirements, and then save an additional copy as a PDF file for submission before your council. Make sure to follow the additional RMD guidelines.

4. Prepare for Your Council.

As you near completion of your paper, you will want to schedule your council.

- Contact Mark Vaporis, (mvaporis@gmail.com). He will work with you to arrange and schedule a council that has the required makeup for your credential. Approximately 30 - 60 days advance notice is needed to schedule a council after your thesis is completed.
- The approximate length of a council examination for a Certificate of Christian Ministry or 3-Year Renewable License council will be approximately 2 - 3 hours. An ordination council will take approximately 3 - 4 hours. You will be asked questions about your paper and your theology to assess your theological competency and alignment with the EFCA, as well as current doctrinal issues and issues related to your lifestyle.
- To prepare, we strongly recommend that you attend a least one other candidate's credentialing council. This provides an orientation to the process, gives you a sense of what kinds of questions will be asked, and builds confidence in your ability to pass the council yourself.
- After your examination, all of the information about your council will be sent to the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing (BOMS) for their review. They make the final decision regarding your credentials after careful consideration of your theological paper and the minutes taken at your council.

Help Is Available!

Please contact the Chairman of the District Board of Ministerial Standing to answer any questions, to encourage you throughout the process, or to solve any problems that arise as you progress towards your ministry credential.

We want you to succeed in this process and are ready to help.

Credentialing Checklist

All candidates need to submit the following before an interview can be scheduled with the District Board of Ministerial Standing (DBOMS):

1. A letter from you stating your desire and reasons for wanting an EFCA credential.
2. A completed "*Affirmation of Fulfillment of the EFCA Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications.*" This includes the completed PSCQ questionnaires from yourself, your spouse or close friend, and your Elders unless it has already

been submitted for a previous credential. Both the spouse/close friend and Elder questionnaires *need to be sent directly to the district from them.*

3. If you or your spouse have a divorce in your background, you need to submit the completed *“Follow-up Questions on Pre-Marital and Marital History.”*
4. Your credentialing thesis in Microsoft Word format, written according to *RMD district and national guidelines* (see below) and reviewed by at least two individuals. One should be well versed in English composition, and the other in EFCA theology.
5. A signed form indicating completion of the “EFCA Required Reading” certificate or completion of the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School’s “History, Theology and Polity course” if you have not previously submitted it.

For those *transferring* their ordination to the EFCA, please *also* include the following:

1. Your original ordination paper from your former denomination or association. If this is not available, you will need to present a 35–40-page ordination thesis according to the guidelines given on the EFCA website. ([EFCA Certificate of Ordination](#))
2. Minutes of your original ordination council (if not available, please let us know)
3. A copy of your present ordination certificate (If the original ordination certificate is unavailable, a letter from the ordaining church including the date of ordination and the years of ministry is required.)

Thesis Guidelines for the RMD

- Use the prescribed format for the two-sided cover page of your thesis (below)
- Capitalize all personal pronouns referring to deity in your thesis.
- Insert page numbers on your thesis (bottom center) with page 1 of your thesis starting with the biographical section.
- Provide continuous line numbers in your thesis, suppressing the line numbers on your title pages, subheadings, and doctrinal statements. To do this:
 - a. click on the “Layout” tab at the top of your Microsoft Word document
 - b. click on “Line Numbers”
 - c. click on “Continuous”
 - d. highlight the title pages, subheadings, and doctrinal statements in your paper
 - e. click on “Line Numbers” again
 - f. click on “suppress for current paragraph.”
- Ask two individuals to proofread your thesis before you send it to the district because papers are expected to be well written. One should be competent in English composition, and the other proficient in theology.
- Send your edited thesis in both Microsoft Word format and as a PDF attached to an email addressed to pbvegter@gmail.com

4. **Credentialing interviews** will be scheduled only after all credentialing materials are:

- received in the district office (due up to 60 days before your credentialing interview)
- reviewed by the appropriate district staff, and
- revised as requested (due 30 days before your interview).

4. Your DBOMS chairman will inform you about the date, time, and location of your credentialing interview. Please, do not schedule anything else for this date, as your interview may last longer than anticipated.

6. Arrive 30 minutes before your credentialing interview. In some cases, depending on your credential, you will be asked to bring two people from your church, who know you well, to serve as witnesses to your character and ministry. They also serve as part of your interview team, who can also ask questions they consider appropriate during your interview.

7. During your interview, give brief answers to the questions your interview team asks, because time is limited. If they want more information, they will ask for it. The make-up of the council will vary depending on the credential desired. The council will question you about your doctrinal beliefs and ministry. The interview takes approximately 2 – 3 hours for a 3-year renewable ministry license (to determine theological competency), 3 hours for the Certificate of Christian Ministry (to determine theological proficiency), and about 3 - 4 hours for the Certificate or Transfer of Ordination (to determine theological mastery).

8. Immediately after your interview, the interview team will deliberate and inform you of their decision to recommend, recommend with conditions, or not recommend you for credentialing in the EFCA. If they recommend you with conditions, follow through with the conditions of your interview team, which may include additional recommended study and revisions to your thesis.

9. Once everything is in order, your region's DBOMS chairman will inform our district superintendent, who will forward all your completed materials to the National Board of Ministerial Standing. They make the final determination regarding your credential, which can take up to six weeks. When they approve you for a credential, they will send your certificate to the Rocky Mountain District, who will forward it to you. (Note: your credential remains the property of the Evangelical Free Church of America and will be given to you "in trust").

(Required Cover Page Format for your Paper)

**To the Rocky Mountain District Board of Ministerial Standing of
the EFCA In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of:**

The Credential you are seeking

(Insert the correct credential above from the following list)

1. Certificate of Christian Ministry
2. Ministry License – Five Year Non-Renewable
3. Ministry License – Three Year Renewable
4. Certificate of Ordination
5. Transfer of Ordination

PRESENTED BY:

(Your Full Name)

(Church or Ministry You Now Serve)

(City, State of Church You Now Serve)

PRESENTED ON:

(DATE OF INTERVIEW)