

**PRESBYTERY OF EAST IOWA  
VALIDATED MINISTRY POLICY  
(Approved 6-9-2015)**

***Venues for Validated Ministries***

The *Book of Order* (2015-17) defines validated ministries as occurring within and beyond the Church. A Teaching Elder who is an active member of Presbytery or a Ruling Elder who is certified to be commissioned to a validated ministry may be engaged in a validated ministry:

- within congregations of this Church as defined by G-2.0504 and G-2.10,
- in other service of this Church as defined in G-2.05 and G-2.10,
- in service beyond the jurisdiction of this Church as defined in G-2.0503, and as further specified below.

**Criteria for a Validated Ministry**

The criteria for determining if a ministry should be defined as a validated ministry in the three active categories above is defined in the Book of Order under the sections G-2.0503a, G-2.10 and G-3.0306. If the ministry in question is service beyond the jurisdiction of the Church, the Commission on Ministry shall make a thorough review of the proposed ministerial function based on the above three citations. The Commission on Ministry then determines if the ministry can be validated. The decision on whether a ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the Church is a validated ministry shall be based upon whether the proposed ministry meets the criteria in the above three citations and all of the following standards established as policy by this Presbytery. A validated ministry is a ministry that:

- Is a mission project or other form of ministry such as a day care project, Chaplaincy or is of the nature of pastoral care, pastoral counseling, pastoral education or health care service or hospice services; is a ministry related by organization, accountability and structure to other denominations with which the PCUSA is in correspondence; is a ministry related to a seminary or other institution of higher learning acceptable to the Presbytery; is a ministry related to a nondenominational organization dealing with issues such as housing programs, the farm crisis, drug and alcohol addiction or marriage and family problems; is a ministry related to an international organization such as a council of churches; or other ministry of service acceptable to the Presbytery.
- Serves others, aids others and enables the ministry of others and relates to the service of people rather than to the production of goods or of profits.
- Makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required to be ordained as a Teaching Elder ordination to becoming a Teaching Elder or required of a Ruling Elder to be eligible to be commissioned to a validated ministry.

- Is carried out in accountability for its character, conduct and performance results to a management committee, board of directors or to others responsible for the overall results of the total ministry program.
- Is carried out in accountability for its character and conduct and is answerable to the Commission on Ministry on behalf of the Presbytery for agreed upon end results or activities with a face to face review of the ministry on a yearly basis.
- Will allow the continuing member to participate actively in the worship and service of a congregation of this Presbytery or in a congregation of a denomination in which the PCUSA is in correspondence and it is expected that the continuing member will so participate.

In addition to the above requirements a ministry shall meet or exceed the following criteria in order to be validated:

- In order to be validated as a validated ministry, the ministry must require that the person filling the job be a Teaching Elder or has successfully passed all requirement for ordination to the point of being eligible to receive a call. This requirement of the ministry may be satisfied by a declaration in the job description covering the ministry, or such a declaration in a letter or similar written communication directed to the Commission on Ministry from a person supervising the person in this ministry from a person in higher authority in the supervisor's chain of command or from a person otherwise in authority in the organization containing the ministry to make such an assertion.
- Or, the ministry must require that the person filling the job be certified to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder, having successfully passed all of the requirements to be commissioned to a validated ministry, such requirements as are stipulated in the Presbytery CRE Policy. This requirement of the ministry may be satisfied by a declaration in the job description covering the ministry, or such a declaration in a letter or similar written communication directed to the Commission on Ministry from a person supervising the person in this ministry from a person in higher authority in the supervisor's chain of command or from a person otherwise in authority in the organization containing the ministry to makes such an assertion.

### **If Criteria Can't be Met to Validate a Ministry for a Continuing Member of Presbytery**

If one or more of the criteria cannot be met, the continuing member should ask to be designated a member-at-large of Presbytery. If Presbytery is unwilling to grant this then the continuing member should seek release from the exercise of ordained office until he or she receives a call to ministry that fulfills all criteria.

Restoration to the exercise of the office is possible without re-ordination by (1) application to and approval of the Presbytery that granted release, (2) reaffirmation of ordination vows, and (3) resumption of a ministry that qualifies for continuing active membership in Presbytery. These steps provide for ease in movement and are in no way judgmental. They are permissive in that re-ordination is not necessary. People should be encouraged to use them.

### **Process for a Teaching Elder or Ruling Elder Certified to be Commissioned to a Validated Ministry to Request that a Ministry be Validated**

- Ordinarily, the Teaching Elder or Ruling Elder certified to be commissioned to a validated ministry seeking to have a ministry validated will submit a request in writing to the Commission on Ministry.
- The Commission on Ministry will either deliberate on the request directly or refer it to a task force for review and recommendation to the Commission on Ministry. In either case a thorough review of the ministry will be conducted against the criteria of a validated ministry as above. This may include a face-to-face interview with the applicant.
- The person requesting that a ministry be validated may be provided with a copy of this policy.
- The person requesting that a ministry be validated shall provide a mission statement from the employing organization, a job description, a contract for service or other document which states expected terms of the call and any other documentation that will provide the needed information for determining if the ministry meets the requirements of this policy to be validated as a validated ministry.
- If the review has been given to a task force, that task force will make a recommendation to the entire Commission on Ministry.
- The Commission on Ministry, following deliberation, will make the final determination on whether to validate the ministry or not.
- If the Commission on Ministry's decision is not to validate the ministry, the person requesting that a ministry be validated may request an additional hearing before the full Commission on Ministry.
- The Commission on Ministry will provide applicants with an opportunity to be heard by members of the Commission on Ministry, and with notice of at least three weeks of the date of the meeting, unless shorter notice is mutually agreed upon.

- At any meeting with members of the Commission on Ministry, “the burden remains with the person requesting that a ministry be validated to demonstrate that the proposed ministry should be validated” and the review may include the review and consideration of “relevant materials from prior years for the purpose of showing a pattern that has continuity with present” circumstances. (GA PJC decision in *Williamson v. Presbytery of Western North Carolina*, Remedial Case 2 17-7, 2006)
- Each Teaching Elder serving in or Ruling Elder commissioned to a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church shall notify the Commission on Ministry of any substantial change in the elements and/or the substance of the ministry within 60 days of the change.