



2020

Application Guidelines

**Receiving the Credentials of a
Commissioned or Constituent Minister
of Volunteers of America**

2020 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Receiving the Credentials of a Commissioned or Constituent Minister of Volunteers of America

Candidates who feel called to become ministers within Volunteers of America's ministry of service are committed to reaching and uplifting all people. They embody Christian leadership and offer compassion, knowledge and the active service of God to those in the greatest of need.

Candidates may seek credentials as either a commissioned minister or a constituent minister, depending on their role within Volunteers of America.

1. A **commissioned minister** is one whose call to the ministry of service is as an employee of Volunteers of America. A candidate applying to become a commissioned minister of Volunteers of America must be at least 18 years of age and must have had at least one year of employment with Volunteers of America at the time of credentialing.
2. A **constituent minister** is one whose call to the ministry of service is as a volunteer of Volunteers of America. A candidate applying to become a constituent minister must be at least 18 years of age and have had two years of continuous and active engagement with Volunteers of America at the time of credentialing.

Prospective commissioned and constituent ministers are to follow the 2020 application guidelines found in the following pages. Candidates who complete their applications to the satisfaction of the Church Governing Board will be credentialed during the Volunteers of America Annual Worship Service to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

All application documents must be submitted through the online portal (*click below*):

<http://voaministrydevelopment.applicantstack.com/x/openings>

Once inside the portal, please select "2020 VOA Prospective Minister Application" and create a user account. All documents must be uploaded to the portal by the noted deadlines. Documents submitted to ministry development staff by email or in hard copy will not be accepted. **Deadline extensions will not be granted.** If a candidate does not submit each part of the application by its deadline, that candidate will be withdrawn from the 2020 credentialing process.

QUESTIONS?

If candidates have questions as they complete their application, they are encouraged to contact Ministry Development Staff, at ministry@voa.org or 703-341-5009.

PART ONE – APPLICATION

Deadline – Friday, September 6, 2019

_____ **Choose a Minister Mentor**

(Must be a Volunteers of America minister)

_____ **Letter of Intent**

(To include candidate's choice for their minister mentor and education track)

_____ **Letter of Endorsement from Local CEO**

_____ **Letter of Endorsement from Local Lead Minister**

_____ **Constituent Member Enrollment Form**

_____ **Application Form for the Credentials of a Minister of Volunteers of America**

To be **signed and dated by candidate and local CEO**. The form must be accompanied by a **candidate's photo in JPG format and a current resume**. For candidates employed by Volunteers of America, a **current job description** - as kept on file with your local human resources office - must also accompany the application form.

_____ **Request for Exemption from the Education Requirement**

This deadline **applies only** to candidates who choose to request that eligible past coursework be recognized by the Church Governing Board application review committee.

PART TWO – EDUCATION & RECOMMENDATION

Deadline – Friday, January 10, 2020

_____ **Fulfillment of the Education Requirement**

Candidates must choose only one:

Track One: Minister Education Curriculum

Track Two: NavPress Design for Discipleship, Leader's Guide and Books One through Seven

Candidates pursuing track two are required to write and submit a one-page reflection for each book. If written reflections are not submitted by the January 10, 2020 deadline, the education requirement will be considered unmet.

_____ **Five Essay Responses**

_____ **Study of Volunteers of America's History**

_____ **Two Letters of Recommendation**

Letters of endorsement from a candidate's CEO and lead minister will not count toward this requirement. The mentor letter will also not count toward this requirement.

_____ **Letter from Mentor**

To include confirmation of a candidate's study of Volunteers of America's history.

PART ONE – APPLICATION

Choosing a Minister Mentor

Deadline – Friday, September 6, 2019

Candidates will be required to choose a Volunteers of America minister to serve as a mentor. Candidates' minister mentors will play a critical role in helping them successfully complete the minister application process.

Candidates should choose a minister mentor with whom they feel comfortable discussing their spiritual journey and development, and who they believe is a strong model of the characteristics of a Volunteers of America minister. Should candidates need assistance in being matched with a mentor, they are encouraged to contact a member of the national office's ministry development staff.

PART ONE – APPLICATION

Letter of Intent

Deadline – Friday, September 6, 2019

The letter of intent is a candidate's opportunity to express their interest in becoming a Volunteers of America minister. Candidates must include in their letter of intent the name of the person whom they have chosen to be their minister mentor. Candidates must also include the track that they will follow in fulfilling the education requirement. Letters of intent should be addressed to the Church Governing Board application review committee.

PART ONE – APPLICATION

Letters of Endorsement from Local CEO and Lead Minister

Deadline – Friday, September 6, 2019

Candidates must speak with their affiliate CEO and lead minister regarding their plans to become a Volunteers of America minister. If the CEO and lead minister support that candidate's choice to become a minister, and are able to incorporate that candidate into their local office's ministry plan, each are asked to write a letter endorsing the candidate's decision.

Ministry development staff must receive letters of endorsement from both a candidate's CEO and lead minister in order for that candidate to go forward with the credentialing process. In the case where a CEO also serves as a local office's lead minister, only one letter of endorsement will be necessary. CEO and lead minister letters of endorsement should be addressed the Church Governing Board application review committee.

PART ONE – APPLICATION

Enrolling as a Constituent Member of Volunteers of America

Deadline – Friday, September 6, 2019

In order to be eligible to become a Volunteers of America minister, candidates must enroll as a constituent member of Volunteers of America. A constituent member is considered a member of the church of Volunteers of America and is able to vote on amendments to the organization's Articles and Bylaws, and may elect members to its national board of directors. Constituent members are expected to be incorporated into their local office's ministry plan, and must contribute 12 volunteer hours a year to that plan in order to be considered in good standing. To be officially enrolled as a constituent member of Volunteers of America, candidates must complete the constituent member enrollment process:

1. Constituent member candidates must meet with their local CEO and lead minister.
2. After a dialogue with their local CEO and lead minister, candidates must review the mission statement, history and Cardinal Doctrines of Volunteers of America and choose the minister whom they would like to perform their constituent member enrollment ceremony.
3. Candidates must complete the constituent member enrollment form.
4. Ministers chosen to lead candidate enrollments must induct candidates as constituent members through the constituent member enrollment ceremony and pledge. Once candidates are constituent members, the ministers who administered the enrollment ceremony, and local CEO, must sign the new members' constituent member enrollment forms.
5. Constituent member enrollment forms must be submitted to ministry development staff at the Volunteers of America national office.
6. Ministry development staff will issue a certificate of constituent membership, signed by the national president & CEO.
7. The certificate will then be sent to the CEO of the newly enrolled constituent member's local office. The local CEO will hold the certificate for office records.

A copy of the constituent member enrollment form can be found on pages 10-11 of these guidelines.

PART ONE – APPLICATION

Completing the Application Form for the Credentials of a Minister of Volunteers of America Deadline – September 6, 2019

The application form collects general information included as part of each candidate's file. To be considered complete, the Candidate Agreement section must be signed and dated by the candidate and their local CEO. In addition, forms must be accompanied by a candidate's photo (JPEG format) and a candidate's current resume. For candidates employed by Volunteers of America, a current job description— as kept on file with your local human resources office – must also accompany the application form.

In the case that you are accepted as a commissioned minister, your job description will be used to determine whether or not you qualify for minister tax status. If you have questions about minister tax status, please contact Ministry Development Staff, at ministry@voa.org or (703) 341-5009. A blank application form can be found on pages 12-13 of these guidelines.

PART ONE – APPLICATION

Request for Exemption from the Education Requirement Deadline – Friday, September 6, 2019

Candidates may apply for an exemption from the required course of study if they have a seminary or divinity degree or have had academic experience comparable to the courses of study offered by Volunteers of America. In order to be eligible for an exemption, a candidate must have completed at least one full year of study at an accredited institution, with coursework that included:

One course in New Testament Studies
One course in Old Testament Studies
One course in Christian Church History

Please note that the Church Governing Board's application review committee must approve all requests for exemption. All 2020 candidates seeking exemption from the education requirement must submit their letter of request for exemption to ministry development staff by **September 6, 2019**. Letters should be addressed to the Church Governing Board's application review committee, and must be accompanied by a transcript reflecting the courses supporting the request for exemption (unofficial transcripts will be accepted).

Each request will then be evaluated by the application review committee. If a candidate is not granted exemption, that candidate will be expected to fulfill the education requirement through education track one or two (please see below for more details).

PART TWO – EDUCATION & RECOMMENDATION

Fulfillment of the Education Requirement

Deadline – Friday, January 10, 2020

Candidates applying for ministry credentials are required to complete a course of theological study to satisfy the education requirement set forth by the Church Governing Board. **Candidates are to complete their education requirement through one of the following tracks.**

Candidates should note that the process of fulfilling the education requirement can be lengthy and challenging, and must be completed under the guidance of a minister mentor. Candidates are encouraged to budget a significant amount of time for completing the education requirement.

Track One: Minister Education Curriculum

This course of study will be led via e-learning platforms and teleconference, and will begin in fall 2019. Candidates should allow for at least two hours per week for study, reflection and participation in a group learning format. Some sessions may be completed online and at the candidate's own pace. Other sessions will be web-based conferences. For more details, please contact Cori Williams, Director, Education & Training, ministry development, at cowilliams@voa.org

Track Two: NavPress Design for Discipleship, Leader's Guide and Books One through Seven

This course of study is completed through local group-based study only. Study must be led by a lead minister, chaplain or minister mentor. Each NavPress book asks its readers to focus on a distinct theme. Candidates are asked to write and submit a one-page reflection for each book, with the reflection focusing on the theme of that book. If all seven written reflections are **not** submitted to ministry development staff by the **January 10, 2020** application deadline, the education requirement will be considered unmet. Copies of the NavPress books can be obtained by contacting ministry development staff.

PART TWO – EDUCATION & RECOMMENDATION

Essay Responses

Deadline – Friday, January 10, 2020

Candidates are to evaluate the following five essay questions and write a 300 to 500 word response for each. All essay responses should be reviewed with a minister mentor before submitting. These writings allow candidates to convey their motivations for becoming a minister, and also serve as an opportunity for candidates and minister mentors to clarify the expectations of a Volunteers of America minister.

As with fulfilling the education requirement, the process of writing the essay responses can be lengthy and challenging. Candidates are encouraged to budget a significant amount of time for completing the essays.

ESSAY ONE: Describe the importance of the Cardinal Doctrines of Volunteers of America.

Cardinal Doctrines of Volunteers of America

1. We believe in one supreme God, who is “from everlasting to everlasting,” who is infinitely perfect, benevolent and wise, who is omnipotent and omnipresent, and who is creator and ruler of heaven and earth.
2. We believe in a Triune God—The Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. We believe these three persons are one, and while separate in office are undivided in essence, co-equal in power and glory, and that all men everywhere ought to worship and serve this Triune God.
3. We believe the contents of the Bible to have been given by inspiration of God, and the Scriptures form the divine rule of all true, Godly faith and Christian practice.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ, when upon earth, was truly man and yet was truly God—the Divine and human being blended in the one Being, hence His ability to feel and suffer as a man and yet supremely love and triumph as the Godhead.
5. We believe that our first parents were created without sin, but by listening to the tempter and obeying his voice, fell from grace and lost their purity and peace; and that in consequence of their disobedience and fall, all men have become sinful by propensity and are consequently exposed to the wrath of God.
6. We believe that Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, by the sacrifice of His life, made atonement for all humanity, and that whosoever will call upon Him and accept his overtures of grace shall be saved.
7. We believe that in order to be saved it is necessary (a) to repent toward God; (b) to believe with the heart in Jesus Christ; and (c) to become regenerated through the operation of the Holy Spirit.
8. We believe that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, thus giving the inward witness of acceptance by God.
9. We believe that the Scriptures teach and urge all Christians to be cleansed in heart from inbred sin, so that they may walk uprightly and serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives.
10. We believe the soul shall never die; that we shall be raised again; that the world shall be judged by God; and that the punishment of the wicked shall be eternal, and the joy and reward of the righteous will be everlasting before the throne of God.

ESSAY TWO: If credentialed as a Volunteers of America minister, how would you “reach and uplift all people and bring them to the knowledge and active service of God?”

ESSAY THREE: Describe how the Church Vision Statement and Principles of Faith articulate Volunteers of America’s tradition of service.

Church Vision Statement

Volunteers of America is a church without walls that answers God’s call to transform our communities through a ministry of service that demonstrates to all people that they are beloved.

Principles of Faith

We are diverse individuals, drawn together as a ministry of service.

We are one church without walls.

We believe God’s love is revealed to us through the teachings of Jesus Christ.

We believe that when serving the most vulnerable, an authentic spiritual transformation happens – for both giver and receiver.

We believe in God’s boundless grace and mercy.

We believe that every individual deserves to be lifted up to the glory of God.

ESSAY FOUR: Briefly describe how your faith journey has brought you to Volunteers of America’s ministry of service.

ESSAY FIVE: Choose one of Volunteers of America’s scriptural basis quotes and describe how that quote applies to the role of a Volunteers of America minister. The scriptural basis quotes are:

Micah 6:8

James 1:22

James 1:27

James 2:14-17

Matthew 5:16

Matthew 7:12

Matthew 25:34-40

Mark 16:15

Mark 10:42-45

II Corinthians 4:5-6

PART TWO – EDUCATION & RECOMMENDATION

The Study of Volunteers of America’s History & Additional Reading

Deadline – Friday, January 10, 2020

Candidates are expected to read, review and discuss *Era of the Founders* by Herbert Wispy with their mentor. The book is located on VOA Connect, under *Ministry Publications*.

Candidates are also expected to read, review and discuss the following books with their minister mentor:

How to Interpret the Bible by James M. Efird; *Pastoral Care: An Essential Guide* by John Patton; and *Church History in Plain*

Language by Bruce L. Shelley.

Copies of these books can be purchased online on amazon.com or can be borrowed by your affiliate.

Candidates do not need to write essays or reflections based on these books. Instead, the mentor letter is to confirm that the candidate and mentor have read and discussed the book.

PART TWO – EDUCATION & RECOMMENDATION

Letters of Recommendation

Deadline – Friday, January 10, 2020

Candidates must have two letters of recommendation submitted on their behalf. Candidates' references can be from 1) someone who has worked with the candidate in a professional setting, or 2) has led the candidate in the practice of their faith. Letters from candidates' family members will not be accepted. Both letters should be addressed to the members of the Church Governing Board's application review committee. Letters of endorsement from a candidate's local CEO and lead minister will not count toward this requirement. The mentor letter will also not count toward this requirement.

PART TWO – EDUCATION & RECOMMENDATION

Mentor Letter

Deadline – Friday, January 10, 2020

This letter will be the minister mentor's opportunity to endorse a candidate as a minister of Volunteers of America. This letter should also confirm that the mentor and candidate have communicated throughout the course of the application process, that the candidate has put his or her full effort into completing the education and reading requirements, and that the candidate fully understands the expectations of a minister of Volunteers of America. The mentor letter should be addressed to members of the Church Governing Board's application review committee. **Please note that this letter will not count as one of the two letters of recommendation and should be written at the end of the application process.**

APPLICATION REVIEW TIMELINE

January 2020

Completed applications are reviewed by ministry development staff and forwarded to the Church Governing Board's application review committee.

February-March 2020

The application review committee meets to discuss applications and chooses candidates to recommend for acceptance into the ministry. The chair of the application review committee presents recommendations to the Church Governing Board for acceptance. Accepted candidates are notified and begin making arrangements to attend Volunteers of America's 2020 national conference, to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

June 2020

Candidates receive credentials during the Volunteers of America annual worship service at the 2020 national conference.



Constituent Member Enrollment Form

1. General information (please list your full name, mailing address, email address and phone number):

2. What is your current association with Volunteers of America (please check all that apply)?

Board Member Staff Volunteer Donor

Other (Please specify) _____

3. Do you agree with the mission statement and Cardinal Doctrines of Volunteers of America?

Yes No

4. Give a brief description of your reason(s) for wanting to become a constituent member of Volunteers of America.

5. How would enrollment as a constituent member enhance your relationship with Volunteers of America?

Signature: _____
Constituent Member

Date: _____

As a Volunteers of America minister, I certify that _____
Constituent Member

has been enrolled as a constituent member of Volunteers of America.

Signature: _____
Minister Performing Enrollment Ceremony

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

As CEO of _____, I certify that _____
Volunteers of America Local Office Constituent Member

has been enrolled as a constituent member of Volunteers of America.

Signature: _____
President/CEO

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____



2020 Application for the Credentials of a Minister of Volunteers of America

First

Middle

Last

Email Address

Phone Number

Street Address

City

State

Zip Code

Please list the Volunteers of America local office with which you are affiliated.

If you are an employee, what is your date of hire at Volunteers of America? *(Please note that all employees seeking the credentials of a commissioned minister of Volunteers of America must have had at least one year of employment with Volunteers of America.)*

If you are a volunteer, on what date (approximately) did you begin volunteering with Volunteers of America? *(Please note that all volunteers seeking the credentials of a constituent minister of Volunteers of America must have had at least two years of continuous and active engagement with Volunteers of America.)*

Briefly describe your role within Volunteers of America.

