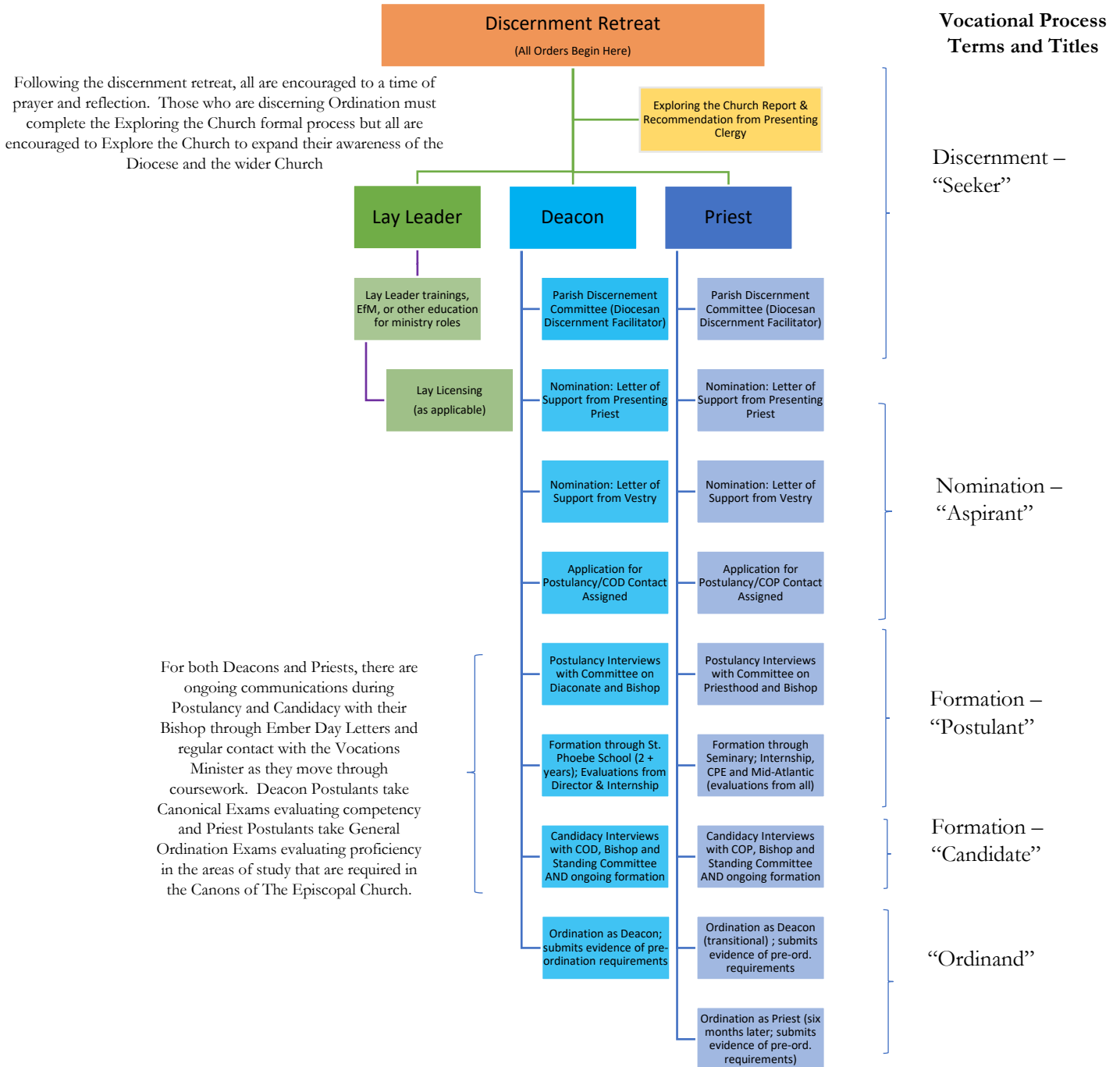


Episcopal Diocese of Virginia Vocations Process Flow Chart



Narrative Description of Steps from Discernment through Postulancy:

- Individual discernment (personal contemplation/prayer/spiritual direction)
- Conversation with clergy about discernment of call
- Clergy/parish sponsors discernment retreat participation (held 3 times/year)
- Individual attends diocesan discernment retreat (now called “Seeker”)
- Following the retreat, seeker completes “Exploring the Church” visits and interviews; for those on the ordination track this includes a conversational/relational meeting with members of the Committee on the Diaconate and/or Committee on Priesthood (this process is to be completed thoughtfully over 4-6 months)
- Seeker prepares Exploring the Church report and discussed with presenting priest and Vocations Minister who may offer feedback and suggestions.
- Final Exploring the Church report sent to Vocations Minister along with a recommendation/request from presenting priest to form a discernment committee
- Vocations Minister contacts/assigns a Diocesan Discernment Facilitator to work with Parish, Priest & Seeker on a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) [note: in smaller parishes this may also include committee members beyond the parish or form as a regional discernment committee...we still call this a “PDC”]
- PDC forms and engages their work. The work is to assist the seeker in listening for, wrestling with and articulating what they perceive as their call to ministry.
- PDC finishes their work through reaching consensus with the *seeker* about their next steps; the diocesan discernment facilitator completes a descriptive report that consensus was reached and sends to Vocations Minister. *The nature of this report is not evaluative, and the report does not “endorse” or “affirm” a particular call.*
- Seeker and Presenting Priest meet to discuss the work and consensus of the PDC.

If the call is to lay ministry:

- Presenting priest and seeker discuss formation and training for lay ministry including licensing, if needed
- Vocations Minister as well as Canon for Discipleship can be resources

If the call is to ordained ministry:

- Presenting priest and seeker discuss nomination for Postulancy and proceed when the presenting priest feels that the seeker is ready to do so, and the parish is ready to support them.
- Presenting priest prepares a letter of support & nomination for Postulancy

- Vestry discerns their support and provides a letter of nomination/support for postulancy (the Vestry may engage in their own interviews & discernment with the seeker before signing the letter of support)
- Nomination for Postulancy is made by sending the nomination form along with presenting priest & vestry letters to the Vocations Minister, who will initiate the electronic Initial Application to the Commission on Ministry form to the seeker.
- For ordained ministry, the Vocations Minister assigns a contact person from the Committee on Diaconate or Committee on Priesthood to shepherd the process.
- The Vocations Minister and the Contact Person help the Aspirant [the seeker, now nominated] prepare the Postulancy Application.
- When Postulancy Application is complete and reviewed by the Contact Person from the Committee, a date for Postulancy Interview with Committee on Priesthood or Diaconate is scheduled
- Committee on Diaconate or Priesthood meets with the Aspirant and supporters (presenting priest, spouse, member of discernment committee)
- Committee on Diaconate or Priesthood makes a recommendation (supporting or not supporting) postulancy and forwards to the Bishop, along with any formation recommendations from the committee.
- The Bishop then interviews the Aspirant, and determines whether or not to grant Postulancy and what the formation pathway will be
- The new Postulant and the Vocations Minister will meet to formalize the logistics of the formation plan recommended by the committee and approved by the Bishop.

Note for Vestries:

The sponsoring parish vestry has several opportunities to endorse those in vocations process:

Nomination for Postulancy: the very beginning of the process; endorsement of potential

Application for Candidacy: about 2/3 way through formation; endorsement of development

Application for Ordination: after/nearing completion of formation; endorsement of readiness for ministry

*For Ordination to the Priesthood, the parish where the ordinand is serving as a deacon (transitional) is the Vestry that endorses their readiness for ordination as a priest (this could also be the sponsoring parish but it does not need to be)