

# **Lead Pastor Search Manual**



**December 2022**

## Table of Contents

### Transition

Where to Begin	3
Initial Steps	4
Determine the Direction Forward	5
Transition Pathways	8

### The Lead Pastor Search Process

The Lead Pastor Search Process – An Overview	9
The Lead Pastor Search Process – Step by Step	11

### Board of Elders' Guidelines

Preparing for the Lead Pastor Search Process	16
General Guidelines	17
Pre-Candidation	18
Candidation	18

### Pastoral Search Team

Role & Responsibilities	20
Screening, Research, and Interviews	21
Working Together	23
Serving as Chair	24

<b>Additional Resources</b>	<b>25</b>
-----------------------------	-----------

## Abbreviations

**ADS** – Assistant District Superintendent

**Board** – Board of Elders

**C&MA** – The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada

**CPD** – Canadian Pacific District of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada

**DS** – District Superintendent

**PST** – Pastoral Search Team

## Transition

During times of transition, churches have a strategic opportunity to pause and reflect on what the next season of ministry could look like. Our hope is that even in the midst of transition, churches thrive.

**Our desire in the Canadian Pacific District is for every church to hire pastoral staff from a posture of spiritual health and with clarity of vision and mission.**

Pastoral change presents both a challenge and an opportunity. This period of transition affords the church an opportunity to re-evaluate and refocus its vision and values. How the church spiritually discerns its future is critical. “In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.” (Pr. 16:9, NIV). This time of transition can also provide the congregation with an opportunity to be involved in ministry in new ways, claiming the biblical role of the priesthood of all believers.

## Where to Begin

We know that transition can feel overwhelming. The following are practical steps at the onset of a transition:

1. Receive a written resignation from the Lead Pastor. This should be addressed to the Board of Elders and a formal motion accepting the resignation should be recorded in the Board meeting minutes.
2. Contact the District Superintendent (DS) or Assistant District Superintendent (ADS) as soon as possible to inform them of the lead pastor’s resignation, even if you believe they may already be aware. The DS/ADS’s early involvement can help provide guidance to navigate the change in leadership. They may want to meet with the Board to discuss their approach to the lead pastor search process.
3. Notify the congregation of the leadership transition by public announcement. The statement read and the announcement date should be agreed upon by the Lead Pastor and the Board.
4. Submit an [Employee Data Form](#) to the District Office. This should be done by the Board Chair or appropriate finance person in the church office to inform them of the personnel change.

## Initial Steps

The following are additional Board responsibilities in the initial stage of a transition:

- ❑ The Board's primary function is to help the Lead Pastor finish well. If appropriate, this may include a type of farewell event or a financial gesture (ex. a love offering) or a gift.
- ❑ The Board should review its structure, role, and responsibilities to ensure that all members are aware of how the Board should function during transition (see [Board Leadership training module on myCPD](#)).
- ❑ Early in the transition, the Board and staff should meet with the Lead Pastor to ask ministry-related questions, including the Lead Pastor's approach to ministry. Understanding things such as staff functioning, program decision-making, etc. help the Board learn as much as possible to determine which transitional path may be best.
- ❑ An exit interview may be conducted by the Board with the Lead Pastor to bring closure to the employment and honour the Lead Pastor.
- ❑ In multiple staff ministries, the Board or a Board designate should have an initial meeting with all staff members to provide clarity on communication and the transition process. Ongoing communication pathways between the Board and staff should also be developed and maintained.
- ❑ The Board needs to pray and discern whether an internal candidate will be considered for the Lead Pastor role.
- ❑ If the church has lead/senior associate or executive pastoral staff, the Board should have a conversation with them regarding their future at the church.
- ❑ If possible, the Lead Pastor should schedule speakers for at least two months following their departure. This responsibility falls to the Board if the Lead Pastor is unable to do this work. Honoraria for guest speakers should be given.
- ❑ A staff member or a team should be designated for planning worship services, including preaching and worship ministries, until the transition path is chosen.
- ❑ The Board should establish who will be overseeing staff and ministries in the church (ex. determine who a small group leader would reach out to for help).

The District Office could be consulted on how to do this effectively. This allows for clear communication and coordination between leadership and ministries.

- The Board should regularly update the congregation, taking time to communicate the process and progress during transition.
- The Board should ensure that the church functions well during transition, including administrative oversight of things such as finances and any required organizational meetings.

### **Determine the Direction Forward**

We recognize it can be a challenge to lead through a season of transition. We are committed to assisting churches by providing the resources and support that address the unique needs of churches in transition. Our district personnel, along with our network of transitional pastors and coaches, are committed to helping each of our churches through times of transition.

The Board of a church in transition is encouraged to take a prayerful pause to consider the direction forward rather than quickly jump into a lead pastor search. The following outlines the five transition pathways (see the flowchart on page 8), and depending on the church's situation, there may be a blending of approaches:

- 1) Directly to Lead Pastor Search
- 2) Transitional Pastor to Lead Pastor Search
- 3) Transitional Coach to Lead Pastor Search
- 4) Transitional Coach and Interim Pastor to Lead Pastor Search
- 5) Succession (Internal or External)

### **Direct to Lead Pastor Search**

A church that has had a healthy departure of the Lead Pastor and is in a healthy, stable state, may choose to go directly to search. This decision should be made in concert with the District Office and should begin with the formation of a pastoral profile for use by the Search Team. The Lead Pastor Search Manual should be distributed to the entire Board and Search Team members.

### **Transitional Pastor to Lead Pastor Search**

A church that is saying goodbye to a long-term Lead Pastor, is struggling with systemic or deep-rooted dysfunction, in a state of compromised health, crisis, or significant decline, or has been 'spinning its wheels' for several years or more should seriously consider a Transitional Pastor.

A Transitional Pastor brings a blend of pastoral experience along with specialized training to help guide churches through a season of transition and into greater health before hiring their new Lead Pastor.

Transitional pastors are never candidates for the lead pastor role. They help churches experience a greater measure of health and vitality by addressing key areas of church life before hiring a new Lead Pastor.

### **Transitional Coach to Lead Pastor Search**

A church that does not need the on-the-ground involvement of a Transitional Pastor and has staff in place to cover pastoral gaps left by the departure of the Lead Pastor may want a Transitional Coach. A Transitional Coach works closely with the Board and church staff to help a church work through the major stages of transition, following the same process as a Transitional Pastor. Coaching models can be configured in a variety of ways to meet the specific needs of the church including onsite visits along with telephone and online coaching.

Transitional coaches are never candidates for the lead pastor role. They help churches experience a greater measure of health and vitality by addressing key areas of church life before hiring a new Lead Pastor.

### **Transitional Coach with Interim Pastor to Lead Pastor Search**

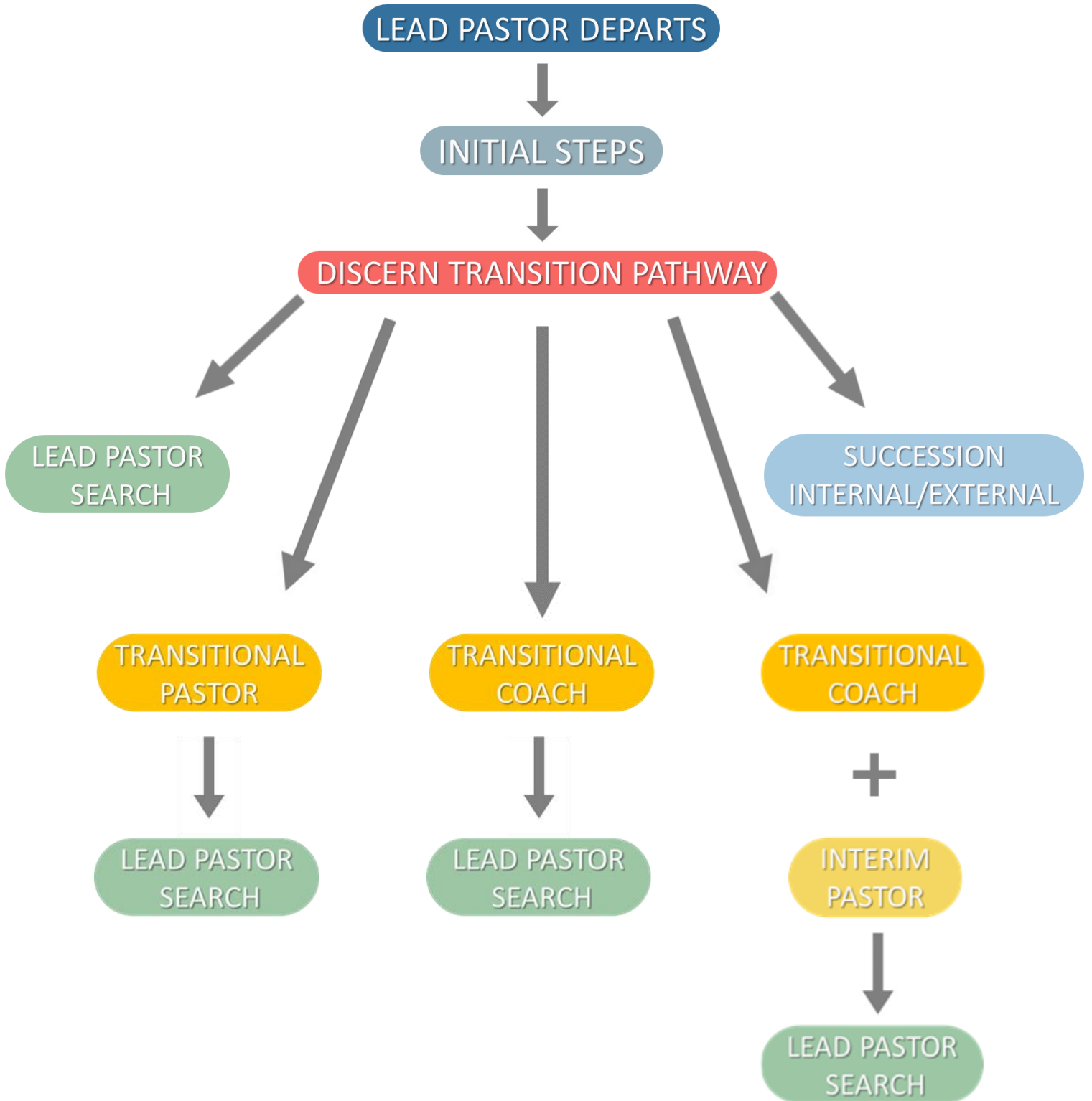
A church that does not need the deep involvement of a Transitional Pastor, has a healthy, stable Board, a staff that is working well together, and a strong sense of vision, values, and ministry but does not have internal staff to cover the pastoral gaps left by the Lead Pastor may want to look at this option. It is also a consideration when a Transitional Pastor is not available.

In this case, a Transitional Coach works with the Board and staff as in the "Transitional Coach to Search" option, and an Interim Pastor is retained for tasks such as preaching, congregational care, staff support, and administration. In some cases, churches appoint an existing staff member as the Interim Pastor.

## **Succession (Internal or External)**

All churches are encouraged to discuss succession early on in the tenure of a new Lead Pastor. Churches may choose to develop a succession plan that includes overlap of a future Lead Pastor with the existing Lead Pastor before the transition. Specialized resources are available from the District Office and can be recommended to churches considering this option.

## Transition Pathways





## **The Lead Pastor Search Process An Overview**

Initial steps prior to a Lead Pastor search process include the items on pages 4-5 of the Lead Pastor Search Manual as well as the following:

- Help the Lead Pastor finish their role well
- Plan Sunday services and support continuing ministry
- Ensure administrative tasks and processes continue to function

\*Indicates actions or decisions that may be done in consultation with the District Office, Transitional Pastor, Transitional Coach, and/or Interim Pastor.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Action</b>
-------------	--------------------	---------------

1	Board	Work through initial steps after the Lead Pastor resigns
2	Board	Determine the transition pathway*

The timeframe for a transition can typically take 6-18 months from this point depending on the transition pathway chosen.

3	Board	Create a Lead Pastor Search Profile*
4	Board	Form the Pastoral Search Team (PST)
5	District Office/ PST	Post employment opportunity on all relevant websites, including the district and national websites
6	PST	Collect resumes
7	PST	Screen, research, score resumes based on Lead Pastor Search Profile criteria, conduct initial interviews, and do reference checks on candidates
8	PST	Present a shortlist of candidates to the Board
9	Board	Conduct pre-candidating interview(s) and choose a preferred candidate
10	Board	Notify DS/ADS of the preferred candidate
11	District Office	Assess candidate's potential fit and inform the Board of their licensing status
11a	District Office	If candidate is not licensed, the licensing process begins
12	Board	Contact preferred candidate about willingness to move forward in the process

<b>Step</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Action</b>
12a	Board/ PST	If candidate declines, review the shortlist and proceed with a remaining candidate <b>(return to step 9)</b> or ask PST to start the search over <b>(return to step 5)</b>
13	Candidate/ Board	Proceed with candidacy
14	Board	Board agrees to hire the candidate, and prepares an employment package <b>(proceed to step 17)</b>
14a	Board	Notify candidate you are not moving forward with them <b>(as in step 13a, either return to step 9 or 5)</b>
15	Board	Notify DS/ADS of decision
16	Board	Forward employment package to DS/ADS for review and potential input
17	Board	Contact candidate with the Board decision and present the employment package, which must be contingent on successful completion of the C&MA licensing process
18	Candidate	Review and/or negotiate the employment package and notify the Board of decision
19	Board	Inform the DS/ADS of the candidate's decision <b>(return to step 13a if candidate declines)</b>
20	Board	Preparation for the arrival of the new Lead Pastor
21	Board DS/ADS	Installation service for the new Lead Pastor

Links to additional resources and documents that may aid in this process can be found on page 25.

## **The Lead Pastor Search Process Step by Step**

The *Local Church Constitution*, Article 9.1 states:

The District Superintendent shall suggest to the Board the names of such workers who in the superintendent's judgment have proper qualifications for Senior Pastor of this church (who may be given another title). The Board shall give consideration only to candidates approved by the District Superintendent. The Senior Pastor of the church shall be called by the Board and appointed by the District Superintendent. Upon appointment by the District Superintendent, the Senior Pastor and spouse become members of the church.

The steps below outline the procedure for the lead pastor search process and can serve as an instructional guide for a Board of Elders and Pastoral Search Team.

### **Step 1-2 Initial Steps & Determining the Transition Pathway**

See pages 5-8 for information on navigating initial steps after the departure of a Lead Pastor and determining the direction forward in a time of transition.

### **Step 3 Create a Lead Pastor Search Profile**

May be done in consultation with a Transitional Pastor, Transitional Coach, Interim Pastor, or the District Office. If you have moved directly to search or are working on a succession plan, we encourage you to reach out to the District Office for a sample profile as well as additional resources and information.

### **Step 4 Form the Pastoral Search Team**

Form a Pastoral Search Team (PST) of approximately 5-8 people that includes elders and members of the church that adequately represent the whole congregation. See pages 20-24 for more information.

## Step 5 Post the Employment Opportunity

Contact the District Office to post the employment opportunity on the CPD website [pacificdistrict.ca](http://pacificdistrict.ca) and the C&MA website [cma.org](http://cma.org). It may also be beneficial to post the opportunity on relevant websites, including post-secondary Christian institutions, to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Consider the following as you create the posting content:

- Include a short description of the position that highlights key parts of the position for potential applicants.
- Use gender-neutral language in the posting and job description.
- Include a contact name and email address for applicants submitting cover letters and resumes, and ask applicants to cc the DS or ADS.
- Request any additional materials you would like applicants to submit (e.g., sermon videos, personality profiles, etc.)
- Include an initial application deadline or closing date; this can always be extended if the need arises and serves to keep the posting visible.
- Submit your posting to Stacy Dryfhout ([stacyd@pacificdistrict.ca](mailto:stacyd@pacificdistrict.ca)) and once you have filled the position, please request to have the post removed.

See **Additional Resources** on page 25 for a sample posting.

## Step 6 Collect Resumes

Review resumes of all potential candidates from all sources. When gathering resumes, the District Office can be a resource for potential candidates. We encourage you to reach out for support here.

## Steps 7-8 Screening, Research, Interviews, & Present a Shortlist to the Board

See pages 21-23 for information on screening candidates, scoring resumes, conducting initial interviews, performing reference checks, and .

**Step 9**  
**Choose a Preferred Candidate**

The Board completes due diligence for their preferred candidate which could include:

- Reference re-checks
- Grip-Birkman assessment review
- Deeper theological discussions through interviews or questionnaires
- Pre-candidation interviews
- Pre-candidation onsite visit by a candidate
- A visit by a Board member to a candidate's current ministry

Pre-candidate as many applicants as you feel necessary. The Board may pre-candidate more than one person at a time. Pre-candidation means no public exposure of the candidate to the congregation. See page 18 for pre-candidation guidelines.

**Step 10**  
**Notify DS/ADS of Preferred Candidate**

The Board notifies the DS or ADS of their preferred candidate prior to a candidacy.

**Step 11 & 11a**  
**Assess Potential Fit & Licensing Status**

The DS or ADS will contribute their assessment of the candidate's potential fit for the Lead Pastor role, and will inform the Board of the candidate's licensing status with the C&MA.

If the candidate is not licensed with the C&MA, the licensing process will be initiated. Licensing is critical and required for employment in pastoral ministry in a C&MA church. Please note that the process requires time for completion of materials by the licensing candidate and includes an interview, which would be conducted once the candidate is proceeding with candidacy.

### **Step 12 & 12a**

#### **Contact the Preferred Candidate About Candidation**

The Board contacts the preferred candidate regarding their willingness to candidate and sufficient time is allowed for the candidate to consider and respond. The Board should inform the DS or ADS of the candidate's decision.

If the candidate declines, review the shortlist and proceed with a remaining candidate (**return to step 9**) or the Board may ask the PST to begin the search over (**return to step 5**).

### **Step 13**

#### **Candidation**

Only one person is candidated at a time and a final decision should be made about that candidate before proceeding to consider a second candidate. See page 18 for more information on candidation and suggested events to include.

### **Step 14 & 14a**

#### **Issue a Call & Employment Package Preparation**

A decision should be made by the Board within a one to two-week period, and the candidate should be notified of the decision. If the Board has agreed to issue a call to the candidate, prepare an offer of employment (see **Additional Resources** on page 25 for a template) as part of a compensation package for the new Lead Pastor.

If the Board decides not to issue a call to the candidate, review the shortlist and proceed with a remaining candidate (**return to step 9**) or the Board may ask the PST to begin the search over (**return to step 5**).

### **Step 15 & 16**

#### **Notify the DS/ADS & Forward Compensation Package**

The Board notifies the DS or ADS of their decision and awaits their affirmation of the candidate. The compensation package is forwarded for review and the DS or ADS may provide input on the offer.

Remember – only candidates approved by the DS or ADS can be offered employment!

## **Step 17**

### **Present the Compensation Package**

The Board contacts the candidate to issue a call and presents the compensation package, which should include a job description for the position (see **Additional Resources** on page 25 for sample Lead Pastor job descriptions). The candidate must be licensed with the C&MA, or the offer of employment must be contingent upon successful completion of the licensing process.

## **Step 18**

### **Review and/or Negotiation of Compensation Package**

Once the candidate has reviewed the offer of employment, they may negotiate aspects of the compensation package with the Board. Once the Board and the candidate are agreed on the terms and the candidate gives their final acceptance, the candidate accepts the call and signs to accept the offer of employment (see **Additional Resources** on page 25 for a template).

## **Step 19**

### **Inform of Candidate's Decision**

After the offer of employment is accepted and signed, the Board notifies the DS or ADS of the candidate's decision.

Should the candidate decline the call and decide not to sign the acceptance, the Board may review the shortlist and proceed with a remaining candidate (**return to step 9**), or the Board may ask the PST to begin the search over (**return to step 5**).

## **Step 20**

### **Prepare for Arrival of the New Lead Pastor**

The Board should communicate to the congregation that the new Lead Pastor has accepted the call and plan for their arrival. Details of the arrival will be worked out between the Board and the new Lead Pastor.

Once it has been communicated and an agreed start date is determined, a copy of the offer, signed acceptance, and job description should be sent to the District Office. The District Office should also be notified of the employment change by completing an [Employee Data Form](#).

## Step 21 Installation Service

The installation service is a special service in which the congregation and the new Lead Pastor family covenant to work together in mutual love and respect in the church. It is encouraged to schedule this as part of a worship service close to the start of the new Lead Pastor's ministry. The Board and/or new Lead Pastor will work with the DS or ADS to prepare for the installation service.

### Board of Elders' Guidelines

#### Preparing for the Lead Pastor Search Process

The entire lead pastor search process should be a spirit-led endeavour. While there are many steps and tasks to take care of, this is ultimately about discerning the leader Jesus is calling and the ministry you are called to as a church. We encourage you to pray throughout this process as you discern the Lord's will for your church.

Being prepared as a Board for the lead pastor search process involves, but is not limited to:

- Reaching out to the District Office for support during a lead pastor search process
- Gathering resources from the District Office to conduct an effective lead pastor search
- Becoming familiar with the Lead Pastor Search Process and the Lead Pastor Search Manual
- Understanding the roles of the Board, the Transitional Pastor, Transitional Coach, and/or Interim Pastor, the PST, the staff, and the DS/ADS in the search and hiring process
- Developing a comprehensive Lead Pastor Search Profile and job description (see **Additional Resources** on page 25 for more information and sample lead pastor job descriptions)
- Addressing the possibility of current staff members becoming candidates
- Ongoing communication of the process with the congregation and those involved in the lead pastor search process



## General Guidelines

### 1. Gauge the impact on the congregation of the Lead Pastor's exit as you enter transition.

You may need to wait to engage the transitional process until the congregation has had a chance to process the Lead Pastor's process.

### 2. Remember confidentiality.

Early in the process, the Board, staff, and PST members should consider confidentiality and commit to upholding it throughout the process as details that are not kept confidential could derail the entire search process. The use of a confidentiality agreement could be considered to outline the parameters. Such an agreement should include maintaining confidentiality about the identity of applicants the team is considering, the status of any particular applicant, and the specific reasons for disqualifying a candidate. Agree on what items and discussions must be kept confidential and what can be shared publicly.

### 3. Involve the congregation and staff in the Lead Pastor Search Process.

Don't create a search process in a vacuum. Consider the use of:

- Surveys
- Roundtable discussions
- Listening circles
- Board members available for input from the congregation and staff

### 4. Carefully develop a Lead Pastor Search Profile.

Based on the needs and expectations within the congregation it is important to develop a clear and realistic profile of the Lead Pastor you are seeking. The profile will address topics like:

- who we were
- who we are now
- who we desire to become
- the community we are trying to reach

See Creating a Lead Pastor Search Profile in the **Additional Resources** on page 25.

**5. Be sure the PST represents the diversity of your church.**

Consider the composition of your church congregation, and work to have as many diverse voices represented as possible on the PST. This includes considering diversity in such areas as age, gender, ethnicity, leadership, etc.

**6. Provide clear direction to the PST.**

The PST is an appointed team that works on behalf of the Board. Their mandate is to bring a shortlist of candidates to the Board for consideration. The team should be well organized and clearly understand their role.

## **Pre-Candidation**

The following are best practices that we have found helpful as you engage in pre-candidation with candidates from the shortlist:

- Provide applicants with a profile of your congregation, including its history. If the applicant isn't familiar with the C&MA, information about the denomination may be helpful.
- If you are looking at a candidate without a C&MA background or who is not currently licensed, the hiring process will take additional time. We encourage you to reach out to the District Office to discuss what the process entails.
- Check references thoroughly prior to candidation.
- Discretion and confidentiality are essential when visiting a candidate who is currently serving in another church.
- Prepare well for interviews (See **Additional Resources** on page 25 for sample interview questions.)
- Communicate on an ongoing basis with applicants throughout the process.

## **Candidation**

It is important to remember that inviting someone to candidate is one more step in the process, and that candidation should take place with only one candidate at a time. Candidating does not necessarily mean that a call will be issued, or that a call will be accepted, but rather is a way for everyone to gather information and determine if there is a fit. It typically includes a more formal interview with the candidate, an opportunity to engage with the congregation, and involvement in key components of the proposed job description.

The Board is encouraged to determine in advance what communication is appropriate with the candidate and should be careful not to assure the candidate while they are candidating that they will be receiving a call.

### The Candidation Experience

1. The candidate should be notified in advance of the candidation schedule and their expected involvement. Efforts should be made to allow for the greatest amount of interaction between the candidate and congregation as possible. This could be done through events such as:
  - An informal evening with the elders and their spouses
  - An informal time with church staff and their spouses
  - An informal congregational dessert hour where the candidate and their spouse could share their life stories
  - A question-and-answer time with the candidate and their spouse
  - Sharing with different age groups or ministry leaders
2. Prepare the congregation for the candidating weekend by encouraging them to pray, read the Lead Pastor Search Profile, participate in events, and communicate how congregational input will be gathered.
3. A member of the Board or PST should accompany the candidate at events to introduce them and provide a sense of connection.
4. A formal interview should be conducted by the Board with the candidate. A list of sample interview questions is provided in the **Additional Resources** on page 25. Opportunity should be given for the candidate to ask any questions they may have. The Board should be prepared to provide an honest assessment of the church, along with its values and vision for the future.
5. A member of the Board or PST should provide the candidate (and spouse if applicable) a tour of the community and provide information on living costs and accommodation.
6. Before departure, the Board should cover all expenses incurred by the candidate for the weekend (e.g., travel, meals, etc.). The church should also include an honorarium for preaching.
7. Debrief initially after the event and subsequently after a few days of reflection.

8. Inform the DS or ADS how the candidacy experience went.

The Board should take adequate time following the candidacy time for prayer and discernment regarding a decision on the candidate. Even though a formal congregational vote should not be taken, it is important that the Board has considered the input of the congregation during the candidacy experience.

A unanimous vote for calling the candidate should be discouraged. Assurance should be given by all Board members that they will cooperate and accept the will of the majority.

## **Pastoral Search Team**

### **Role & Responsibilities**

Members of the PST need to understand their role and responsibility in the lead pastor search process in order to conduct an effective search. The role of the PST is to facilitate an effective candidate search for a new Lead Pastor. The PST also conducts an interview process concluding with the presentation of a shortlist to the Board for the final interviewing and candidating process.

The PST has no executive authority other than that granted by the Board, and must not disclose any information to church staff, the congregation, or applicants without permission of the Board.

### **Responsibilities**

- Discern well throughout the search process
- Ensure a high level of confidentiality
- Be available to serve until a suitable candidate is found
- Be familiar with this Manual and the Lead Pastor Search Process
- Adhere to the Lead Pastor Search Process and operate within the PST mandate
- Evaluate candidates based on the Lead Pastor Search Profile and job description
- Be aware of applicable human resource regulations.
- Perform reference checks for shortlisted candidates
- Fully document PST activities
- Provide regular reports on PST work to the Board

### **PST Composition**

- A minimum of 2 elders plus 3-6 members in good standing from the congregation
- The Board may choose to appoint or have the church membership elect 3-4 members from the congregation.
- Appointed for up to a one-year term, with possibility of extension by the Board
- The Board will appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair

### **Giftedness and Skills**

Potential PST members should be evaluated for the following key gifts and skills that will contribute to an effective search and good teamwork:

- Spiritual gifts of discernment, helps, administration, servanthood, and leadership
- A high commitment to confidentiality and discretion, someone who is not careless in conversations or in handling sensitive documents
- Good research skills and ability to follow search protocols carefully
- Above average listening skills, both verbal and non-verbal
- Ability to work in partnership with others and work to deadlines
- Commitment to a consensus model of decision-making at the search team level
- Confidence in the leadership of the Board to complete the search

### **Screening, Research, & Interviews**

The Board will submit criteria to the PST for selecting the new Lead Pastor based on the Lead Pastor Search Profile. The PST is tasked with conducting initial screening and interviews for potential candidates and providing a shortlist of prospective candidates in recommended priority order to the Board at the conclusion of the process. The screening and interviewing process involves:

- Prayerful discernment to reach a decision
- Understanding the Lead Pastor Search Process (see page 9 for an overview)
- Gathering and evaluating resumes and tabulating information
- Conducting reference checks and initial interviews
- Developing a shortlist of candidates
- Presenting the shortlist to the Board

## **Screening Process for Resumes**

Once you have received a number of applications, it may be helpful to screen applicants using the following method:

**Red Light** – This resume doesn't come close to the Lead Pastor Search Profile and will not be considered.

**Yellow Light** – This resume is not seen as having a close fit by most PST members but could be worthy of reconsideration. At best, it is a definite maybe.

**Green Light** – This resume is realistically close to the Lead Pastor Search Profile and is worthy of further consideration. What do we want to know that would help us move forward with this candidate?

An additional scoring rubric may include evaluating candidates by using the following three categories:

- Plus – items that are a benefit to the position and are considered an asset
- Interesting – items that are interesting but not necessarily an asset or negative
- Minus – items that may not benefit the position and/or are of concern

If you only have one application, you must still pursue a thorough interview process. Care should be taken not to hire a candidate simply because they are the only person available. Consider if there are internal applicants that should be approached.

The PST is encouraged to conduct preliminary phone interviews using behavioural questions which focus on the candidate's actual performance and to check their references. If possible, PST members may visit the candidate's current ministry in order to gather firsthand information. Ask candidates to submit recordings and/or videos of sermons. For an effective, legal screening and interviewing process, ensure you are aware of any human resource laws that may apply.

## **An Important Note for Pastoral Search Teams**

For a PST, this search process is one small portion of your life, however, for a pastor and their family contemplating a new role, it may be the most significant event in their life right now.

Practically, this means that a PST should:

- communicate to the applicants whenever there is something new to communicate
- always let candidates know when the next meeting of the PST is taking place
- let candidates know what, if any, decisions or progress was made in the PST meeting related to them, ideally right after the meeting or the next day
- not act in any way that causes an applicant to believe that they are the only person under consideration if that is not the case
- not go more than a week without updating candidates in some way, if only to say there is nothing new to report

In a context where there is a shortage of pastors, respecting the applicants in this way and acting as though you desire to hire a pastor can tip the balance in your favour.

### Interview the Applicants

- Every member of the PST should receive copies of the resumes from each applicant.
- Determine which of the applicants you wish to interview face-to-face, by phone, or by video call. Schedule a two-hour meeting with each candidate, preferably not more than two per week.
- Be prepared with the kind of questions you want to ask the applicant (see **Additional Resources** on page 25). Without preparation, interviews will be unfocused and disorganized.
- Make sure that every member of the PST asks questions. Begin with questions emphasizing the applicant's strengths and successes. (See Evaluation for Prospective Candidates in the **Additional Resources** on page 25.)
- An interview by a group of unknown persons can be unnerving for the applicant. Deal with each applicant with the same kind of gentleness you would want to be dealt with if you were being interviewed. Be careful not to make your conclusion too early in the interview. Unfavourable impressions can be created quickly from very few negative items, yet favourable impressions build slowly.

An effective screening and interviewing process will result in a shortlist of up to three potential candidates. The PST may cease to function once their shortlist of candidates is submitted to the Board.

---

### **Present a Shortlist to the Board**

Once you have agreed upon your shortlist of candidates, you must now meet with the Board to present your work to them. Supply the Board with a one-page biographical sketch of each candidate summarizing their education, experience, giftings, and leadership qualities. The document should also include the reasons why the PST believes each candidate is a good match for the church.

The Board now takes over the process and moves towards the selection of the primary candidate. The Board may request further assistance from the PST in preparing for the candidacy experience.

### **Working Together**

It's important that each team member is included in the discussion process. Here are some considerations when working together as a team:

- Give everyone the opportunity to contribute.
- Be willing to engage with new perspectives.
- Come to meetings prepared.
- Keep meetings focused on the agenda.
- Accept that there may not be unanimity on every decision.
- Express ideas respectfully and graciously.

### **Serving as Chair**

Serving as the Chair of the PST is a unique role that includes the following responsibilities:

- Orienting members to the Lead Pastor Search Manual and the Lead Pastor Search Process
- Guiding the PST in its work, including calling and leading PST meetings and ensuring careful records are kept (minutes, interview notes, etc.)
- Ensuring the PST creates an agreed upon process for initial research and interviews
- Guiding the discussion, including moving it forward in out of potential stalemates



- Responding to questions about the search process from members of the congregation
- Often the first contact between the church and a prospective Lead Pastor
- Ensuring that regular reports are provided to the Board
- Ensuring that PST sub-teams complete their assignments, which usually includes initial interviews and appropriate reference checks of resumes that have been approved by the PST
- Helping the PST prepare a prioritized shortlist and its presentation to the Board
- Evaluation the search process at the conclusion of the work

The Chair must not speak for the church or Board, nor make any promises or implied promises on behalf of either.

## Additional Resources

**Note:** You must be logged into myCPD to access the following resources.

### **Creating a Lead Pastor Search Profile**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Creating-a-LP-Search-Profile-May-2022.pdf>

### **Sample Website Job Posting**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Sample-Website-Job-Posting-Jun-2022.pdf>

### **Sample Interview Questions for Lead Pastor Applicants**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Sample-Interview-Questions-for-LP-Applicants-Jun-2022.pdf>

### **Evaluation for Prospective Lead Pastor Candidates**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Evaluation-for-Prospective-Candidates-Jun-2022.docx>

### **Sample Lead Pastor Job Description #1**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Lead-Pastor-Job-Description-1-Jun-2022.pdf>

### **Sample Lead Pastor Job Description #2**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Lead-Pastor-Job-Description-2-Jun-2022.pdf>

### **Offer of Employment Letter Template**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Offer-of-Employment-Letter-Template-Jun-2022.docx>

### **Schedule A – Precis of Terms of Employment Template**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Schedule-A-Church-Template-Jan-2022.docx>

### **Schedule B – General Terms and Conditions of Employment Template**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Schedule-B-Church-Template-Jan-2022.docx>

### **Acceptance of Offer of Employment Template**

<http://pacificdistrict.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Acceptance-of-Offer-of-Employment-Jun-2022.docx>