Initiating the process with your session

- Express your desire to formally enter the preparation for ministry process to the pastor or session moderator of the congregation to which you belong.
- Find out about the application process to be considered for enrollment as an inquirer in your presbytery.
- Obtain an application packet, if required, and begin to complete it.
  - Arrange for any background checks or psychological profiles required by your presbytery as part of the initial consideration phase.
  - Your session may have its own application materials, or it may ask to review your materials required by the presbytery.
- Once these materials have been completed, request that the pastor or moderator schedule a time for you to meet with the session.
- Meet with the session (or its designees), and receive its formal decision on whether to endorse your request to the presbytery to become an inquirer.

Keep in mind that whether or not the session endorses your request to become an inquirer with the presbytery, you are just beginning a process of discernment regarding your future in sharing the gifts God has given you in service to God’s people. If the session endorses your request, the partners in this process will be expanded to include others from the presbytery. If it decides not to endorse your request, they will continue to encourage you to find those places of ministry and service where your gifts can be used within the faith community.

Is there any process to appeal a session’s (or a presbytery’s) decision not to accept an applicant into the preparation for ministry process?

At the core of a Reformed theology of vocation is the conviction that God’s call to ministry will be discerned by both the individual and the community. Sometimes the individual will have to be willing to accept the community’s “no” or “not yet,” just as sometimes the community has to accept an individual’s “no” or “not yet” as the Spirit continues actively working in our lives. There is no “right to be ordained,” and so there is no appeal process designed to preserve such a right. The processes of both the session and presbytery should be fair and equitable, but part of entering the process is agreeing to accept the community’s discernment as well as your own.