Taking the session endorsement to the presbytery

- Upon the session’s action to endorse the applicant’s request to be enrolled by presbytery as an inquirer, the report of that action is sent to the appropriate person at the presbytery along with the required supporting materials.
- The presbytery’s committee will review the materials with the applicant, probably requiring an interview either in person or through video or other teleconferencing means.
- If the presbytery’s committee acts to recommend enrollment as an inquirer (or acts on behalf of the presbytery to take that action through a “delegated authority” granted by the presbytery), the committee and the applicant/inquirer will establish a covenant outlining expectations for the joint work of discernment. Such covenants are likely to include:
  - A release allowing the presbytery’s representatives to freely explore any information bearing on the inquirer’s “suitability for ministry” with the session, graduate theological education institution representatives, supervisors in the practice of ministry, mental health professionals, spiritual directors, or others engaged with the inquirer in tasks listed in the covenant agreement or otherwise related to the preparation for ministry process.
  - A formal listing of specific goals or responsibilities related to the five key developmental areas in the preparation for ministry process.
  - Agreed upon expectations regarding when the next formal consultation will take place, what materials are to be submitted in advance of that consultation, and what communications will be expected to continue building the relationship between formal consultations.
- The presbytery may require you to appear in person before a plenary session of the presbytery to answer questions related to your sense of call before the presbytery votes on whether to enroll you as an inquirer.

**FAQ**

- Who in your presbytery is responsible for making recommendations about enrolling inquirers?
- Do they have a set schedule for meetings?
- How much lead time do they require for receiving materials to be added to their docket?

**My presbytery’s application requires some very personal information about my background and financial situation. Is it necessary for me to provide this information, and will it be treated confidentially?**

Discernment of an individual’s call and suitability for ministry is an intensely personal process. There is no way around that. Presbyteries ask for information they have found by experience to be essential to the decisions they must make. Financial information helps them to understand what assistance you may need with funding seminary education, some insight into your expectations about standards of
Psychological assessments provide information not only about personal wholeness but also approaches and attitudes about leadership. Background checks are an essential aspect of presbyteries’ oversight responsibilities for all those who engage in ministry under their supervision. Presbyteries understand the sensitive nature of this information and will treat it with the confidentiality it requires, sharing it only with those persons who have a need to know in order to fulfill their responsibilities within the process.

**What specific personal and background information does your presbytery require, and how does it use that information?**

**How can thinking about why a presbytery would need this information help you to deepen your own understanding of ministry and yourself as a potential minister of the Word and Sacrament?**

**Can I refuse to have certain items included in my covenant agreement?**

The presbytery’s committee will work with you in formulating goals with clear benefit in helping both you and them to discern your “suitability for ordered ministry.” However, presbyteries have broad discretion in what they require of inquirers and candidates. Asking to come under care includes with it the responsibility to accept the presbytery’s guidance in your particular preparation. If you cannot accept a requirement they believe is necessary, you are free to withdraw from the preparation for ministry process.