

District Director of Lay Servant Ministries Training

South Carolina Annual Conference

The United Methodist Church

Because of the postponed General Conference of 2020, Discipleship Ministries has not yet updated The Lay Servant Guide for Directors and District Committees on Lay Servant Ministries. The present guide is for 2017 – 2020 and is still in effect according to Discipleship Ministries. Therefore, this document with important information for District Directors and District Committees on Lay Servant Ministries and their duties, will be in effect until updated guidelines are provided through Discipleship Ministries.

This information is designed to help you serve as an effective district director. Your basic task is to enlist, train, guide, and support lay servants as they equip and prepare others “for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). These guidelines will outline the responsibilities of the district director and the district committee on Lay Servant Ministries.

District Director of Lay Servant Ministries

The position of district director of lay servant ministries is to be filled in a manner to be determined by the district. **This position SHALL be filled by a certified lay servant (BOD, ¶1668).**

The district director of lay servant ministries chairs the district committee on lay servant ministries, or it’s equivalent, is a member of the district board of laity, a member of the Lay Leadership area of the District Connectional Ministries, and is a member of the conference committee on lay servant ministries.

The district director works with the conference director of lay servant ministries to provide support and direction for the development of laity training within the districts. The district director may also work with the district superintendent in finding suitable candidates for lay servant ministries instructors and members of the district committee on lay servant ministries.

An effective district director of lay servant ministries works with the district lay leader, the district superintendent, the district committee on lay servant ministries and the district board of laity to equip the laity of the district for mission and ministry by providing a system for developing principled Christian leaders so that the mission of the church – to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world – is fulfilled.

An effective district director of lay servant ministries also sees lay servant ministries as a vital part of a larger discipleship system in the local churches of the district.

Responsibilities of the District Director of Lay Servant Ministries

- Commit to support the laity (lay servants and others) in spiritual formation and development of skills in leading, caring, communicating, and discipleship to help grow vital congregations and increase missional presence in the community
- Interpret the needs of the district for training opportunities and work with the district lay servant committee, the district superintendent, and others to select locations and times for training which will be conducive to maximum participation by the laity of the district
- Recruit qualified course instructors (Course instructors who are laity should be members of a United Methodist Church. Clergy who are United Methodist Pastors may also be course instructors. However, every effort should be made to find qualified laity to fulfil the roles of instructors.) Only under circumstances of “expertise” in a particular area should non-United Methodist instructors be used. When a non-United Methodist instructor is to be used, then the district superintendent should be notified and give approval.
- Be alert to opportunities in which lay servants may serve.
- Nurture and support lay servants in their roles and responsibilities.
- **Keep accurate records of lay servants within the district and help local church leaders to do this within their congregations.** This is a very important role of the district director. Records should be kept in a digital format which can easily be shared with others within the district and the conference. The records should not be kept on the hard drive of one’s computer only, but also on a “thumb drive” which is continually updated and kept in a safe place. It is suggested that in addition to the district director having these records, that the records be also kept on a district computer and updated on a regular basis. Plans are to develop a conference wide data base where records will also be kept.
- Provide for forms of recognition for certified lay servants, certified lay speakers, and certified lay ministers.
- Keep training opportunities open to **all laity** (All laity, including laity of different denominations are welcomed to participate in lay servant classes as they are available. Records of the lay persons who are members of other denominations should be kept in a separate file and updated as these persons may one day become members of a United Methodist Church. However, only a certificate of completion should be given to the participant who is not United Methodist. Lay Servant Ministries is unable to “certify” persons who are not members of a United Methodist church.
- Chair the district committee on lay servant ministries.
- Receive email from the conference director(s), conference lay servant committee, Discipleship Ministries, and communicate any pertinent information to all lay servants in the district

- Attend all meetings (both in person and zoom) of the conference lay servant committee.
- Be available for interviews as a part of the conference committee on lay servant committee of potential certified lay ministers, and certified lay ministers seeking renewal.
- If possible, attend the District “Set-Up” meeting each year to explain the importance of Lay Servant Ministries to the gathered clergy and remind the clergy of their responsibilities related to promoting lay servant ministries in their local church, approving laity to attend lay servant classes, approve lay persons to be certified lay servants, certified lay speakers, and certified lay ministers (If the district director cannot attend the set-up meeting, the district lay leader may do this on behalf of the district director since the district lay leader **should be a certified lay servant and a member of the district committee on lay servant ministries.**)
- Complete and turn in paperwork for those lay servants seeking to become Certified Lay Speakers and Certified Lay Ministers in a timely manner.
- Keep accurate records of the dates which Certified Lay Speakers and Certified Lay Ministers are due to be recertified and notify these persons.
- Set up interviews for candidates for Certified Lay Speaker and Certified Lay Minister with the district committee on lay servant ministries, and notify the conference director of the outcome of the interview, including the paperwork required for certified lay ministers.
- Keep accurate accounting of any funding, monies, accounts, etc. which come under the district lay servant ministries program.

In addition to the above responsibilities, the District Director of Lay Servant Ministries should display a positive attitude, a pleasant smile, and a welcoming presence when leading lay servant schools, or presenting to groups about lay servant ministries.