



A GUIDE TO THE RLP for Rostered Leaders in the ELCA

Those on the Ordained and Lay Rosters of the ELCA, and Candidates for these Rosters

Call Process Online: <http://www.elca.org/call-process/>
ELCA Community: <https://community.elca.org/login/>

WELCOME

Call Process is a partnership of common purpose as ministry sites, rostered leaders, synod bishops and churchwide offices find ways to mutually cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the call process. This Guide is intended to help rostered leaders and candidates for rostered ministry understand the purpose and use of the *Rostered Leader Profile* (RLP), its three supporting forms and the ELCA's Mobility Database System (MDS).

The RLP and other forms that rostered leaders will need can be found at Call Process Online (www.ELCA.org/call-process). Instructions on how to create an online account, fill out the web-based forms and submit them electronically are given below. The information from your submitted RLP is stored in the Mobility Database System which makes it possible for RLPs to be sorted, studied, searched and shared in a quick and efficient manner.

Rostered leaders are encouraged to monitor the status of their forms online and to actively engage their synod's Call Process Administrator (www.ELCA.org/Call-Process/Call-Process-Administrators) in conversation about their discernment and mobility. Rostered leaders can also view, search and print some information that ministry sites have submitted on their *Ministry Site Profiles*. *Current Openings* (www.ELCA.org/Call-Process/Current-Openings) serves as a bulletin board of ministry opportunities across the ELCA.

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

The RLP is designed to stimulate reflection, to summarize a rostered leader's interests and ministry, and to be used as a professional résumé.

- **INTENDED USERS:** The RLP is meant to be used by ordained and lay rostered ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as candidates for the roster. Rostered leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada may also use the RLP when considering a call into the ELCA if they already have an ELCA Leader Key. The RLP is not intended for use by other church professionals (e.g. non-



rostered musicians, youth & family ministers, directors of Christian education, administrative assistants and the like).

- **AN INTRODUCTION:** The RLP is meant to be a conversation starter or introduction to the rostered leader's faith and ministry. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of a rostered leader's journey in life and service. Focus on the key things that describe you and will pique the interest of the Call or Search Committee. Give special attention to writing your "Personal Ministry Statement" since what you write will be featured prominently on the printed RLP.
- **FLEXIBILITY:** The RLP seeks to encourage your creativity and initiative by offering options and choices for presenting yourself. Your responses in the "Narrative" sections should be thoughtful and concise. The "Commentary" section of the RLP invites you find ways to creatively present yourself. The optional "Twelve Reflections on Ministry and Context" gives you the opportunity to go deeper into some key issues of your ministry if you wish.
- **CORROBORATION:** The RLP requires that a recommendation be submitted by a person of the rostered leader's choice using the form found on Call Process Online. The reference will be asked to identify your best gifts using the same list of gifts that you used in your RLP. This helps to validate the information on the RLP and gives Call or Search Committee's another perspective.

DISCERNMENT PROCESS

What stirs you to think about mobility just now?
Are you talking with a trusted colleague or friend?
Do you feel you are being pulled toward something?



One of the final questions on the RLP asks about your Discernment Process. Before starting to work on your RLP, spend time in discernment. Think and pray about your sense of *Calling* at this time in your ministry and consider these three things:

- Who are you as a person of faith and passion? What are your core commitments and values? What ministry activities give you energy and joy?
- What are you clearly good at? What tasks bring out the best in you and seem to be valued by others?
- What contexts for ministry are engaging to you? Are there family or relationship needs that have to be met in any setting for ministry that you find yourself in?

An experience of *Call* that feels powerful, Spirit-inspired and authentic often happens where these three things converge. A Call that speaks to your passions and imagination, that requires the very gifts and talents that you are eager to offer, and that is located in a setting that you can understand and embrace is a Call indeed. A Call that speaks to just one or two of these things may not be the best match for your service in ministry. Thus your conversation with colleagues and your own prayerful discernment is important, and much of the RLP will give you the opportunity to share what you have discerned.



STEPS IN COMPLETING YOUR RLP

Get Acquainted

Before launching into the RLP, it would be wise to take a look at samples of the forms. Go to Call Process Online (www.ELCA.org/Call-Process/Rostered-Leaders) and download a sample of the RLP. You might find it especially helpful to answer the narrative questions while you are offline. This way you can work at your own pace and benefit by the spellcheck feature. Later you can block the text and drop it into the online RLP. Remember keep your answers focused and concise – less than 250 words.

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Creating an Account

To begin work on your Rostered Leader Profile you must first join *ELCA Community* – your gateway to the many resources and services offered by the ELCA. As a member of *ELCA Community* you can sign up for events, donate, manage your profile and access the forms involved in call process.

- If you have not already joined *ELCA Community*, please note: an account may have already been established for you when *ELCA Community* was created. To find out, go to the Community Login page (<https://community.elca.org/login>) and click on “Forgotten password”. You will be asked to submit your email address; it must match the one the ELCA has on file for you. You will receive an email with instructions on how to reset your password.
- Never create a new account unless you are sure that no account already exists. Go to the Community Login page and click “New user registration”. Enter your profile information and provide your Leader Key number (found on your ID card or by calling your Call Process Administrator).
- Once you enter *ELCA Community* you will be taken to the Welcome page where you will see a menu of things you can do. Under “Leader Portal” choose “I am already a rostered leader” in order to go to the menu containing call process information. Choose “My Rostered Leader Profile” to begin work on your RLP.

Filling out and Submitting the RLP

The RLP is completed on the web; it does not require that you download software in order to work on the form.

- SAVE YOUR WORK frequently as you proceed using the “Save and Continue” button on the bottom of each page. If your online session times out, you will lose the work you have done on it since you last saved your work.
- REQUIRED FIELDS (marked with *) must be filled in before proceeding.
- YOUR LEADER KEY (the ELCA’s ID number for you) is required but does not print on any of your forms.
- TWO PARTS: The RLP is divided into two sections. Sections I-IV will be distributed to Call Committees; Section V is intended to be for the bishop’s information.



- **FINAL REVIEW:** When you feel your RLP is complete and ready to submit, click on "Submit" at the end of the form. The next page will encourage you to first download a PDF copy of the RLP so you can review it one last time.
- **CORRECTIONS:** You can reopen your RLP to make any last corrections.
- **SUBMIT:** When you are really sure your RLP is ready, click on "Submit" on the final page of your RLP. Both you and your synod office will receive an email confirming that the RLP has been received.
- **ACTIVATION:** The RLP does not become active in the Mobility Database System until your synodical bishop approves it, and the two supporting forms have arrived: the *Authorization and Release* (signature) page (see below) and the *Reference Recommendation* form.
- **RLP STATUS:** You can, as needed, monitor your RLP forms by going to the ELCA Community login and clicking on Leader Portal and then Call Process. Here you can choose to review your RLP, update your RLP, look at the status of your RLP, or request the supporting forms.
- **UPDATE:** If you edit and resubmit a RLP that is already active in the system, your new RLP will require re-approval and a new signed *Authorization and Release* page.
- **ARCHIVING:** Your approved RLP will remain active until you request that it be archived, or the bishop determines that it must be archived, or a year has elapsed since it was first submitted.

Some Helpful Tips

- **BE CREATIVE:** The RLP gives you the freedom to add comments, share ideas and passions, and present yourself and your gifts. Make your RLP distinctive.
- **BE THOUGHTFUL:** The narrative questions are the most important. It is more important to write concisely and insightfully than to just write many words.
- **BE HONEST:** It never pays to represent yourself in a way that will not prove to be true over time. You are more likely to match successfully with a site if both you and they are honest about your respective ministry, style and gifts. Romans 12:3 is good advice.
- **BE SPECIFIC:** Study the list of skills and preferences and focus your answers. Avoid being too general in your responses. Limit the number of synods you are open to.
- **SEEK COUNSEL:** Have someone who knows you well review your RLP with you. Ask them to be honest and clear with you.
- **DISCERNMENT:** Rostered leaders who are not actively seeking call may nevertheless elect to complete a RLP as a matter of spiritual reflection and ministry discernment.
- **COOPERATE:** Never approach a congregation or organization directly about their position without first consulting with their synod bishop. Each synod bishop has a shepherding role in call process within their synod that must be respected.



THREE SUPPORTING FORMS

The various forms that rostered leaders use in the call process come together to form the Rostered Leader Portfolio. The portfolio contains the Rostered Leader Profile and other documents submitted by the rostered leader, plus the following three supporting forms:

Authorization and Release (required signature page)

You are required to submit a signed copy of the *Authorization and Release* form to your synodical bishop and to the person completing a reference recommendation form for you. This form is not optional. It is found as the last page of your printed RLP. It may be submitted by mail, by fax, or by email as a pdf attachment. A copy of the signed form will be sent to each call committee considering you. If you update your RLP, this form is to be signed and sent again.

Reference Recommendation (required)

You are required to have someone who knows you well complete a recommendation form about your style and skills for ministry. You should first secure their willingness to do this and provide them with a copy of the *Authorization and Release* form. Then return to the ELCA Community Login page (<https://community.elca.org/login>) to select Leader Portal / Rostered Leader / Call Process / Request a Reference. Enter the person's name and email address. The system will send the person a request and the login information to access the form. After the person has submitted the form, you and the reference will receive an acknowledgement by email. The form automatically attaches to your RLP. The form is considered confidential. If you would like to review it, please ask your reference for a copy.

Twelve Reflections on Ministry and Context (optional)

You may choose to enhance your RLP by providing additional information on the *Twelve Reflections* form. The form is listed immediately alongside the Reference form (see above). While the form is optional, some synod bishops may elect to require that one or more of the questions be completed. Once submitted it automatically attaches to your RLP.

THE MOBILITY DATABASE SYSTEM

Information found on call process forms submitted by Ministry Sites and Rostered Leaders is stored in the Mobility Database System (MDS). The MDS allows users to sort, study, search, and share information in a quick and efficient manner. You are not required to use the current call process forms and MDS, but without them your ability to present yourself as



available for call is severely limited. Please discuss this with your synodical bishop or Call Process Administrator.

Search Applications

“Current Openings” (www.ELCA.org/Call-Process/Current-Openings) is a searchable database of information taken from Ministry Site Profiles. The page allows you to search across the ELCA based on your stated criteria. A rostered leader should never use the information posted at “Current Openings” to approach a congregation directly about their position. Rostered leaders are always to work through their synodical bishop or Call Process Administrator.

Similarly, Bishops and Call Process Administrators have access to a protected search application that allows them to sort, study, search and share information found in Rostered Leader Profiles. This enables the bishop to identify potential candidates for call to a particular ministry site. The MDS highlights for the bishop each rostered leader’s Personal Ministry Statement, current ministry setting, and ministry preferences. While all bishops can view all the RLPs that are available at any one time, bishops have agreed never to infringe on the ministry and territory of another without their prior knowledge and consent.

Potential Benefits of the MDS

Efficiency is not the only outcome of the creation of the Mobility Database System. The MDS necessitated the creation of an updated set of call process forms designed to invite creativity, reflection and initiative. This has allowed rostered leaders and ministry sites to take a more active role and responsibility for their call process. It has also increased the transparency of the process. Rostered leaders and ministry sites are invited into a time of prayerful and careful reflection on key topics highlighted in the forms – understanding one’s mission and calling, giftedness and context. In the end, a partnership of common purpose is fostered as ministry sites, rostered leaders and synod personnel work together to identify leadership and increase mission.

The Mobility Database System is a complex array of programming and protocols. You are encouraged to offer your comments to help improve its friendliness and functioning.

CALL PROCESS ONLINE

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