

Procedures to Planting a Church

In the New York District Assemblies of God
PO Box 39 Liverpool, 13088-0039

The following steps are to help and guide you launch your new church. As each step is completed, write the date in the blank to the left of the step number. This will help prevent the church planting process from being delayed due to an incomplete step.

_____ **Step 1: Take A Church Planter Assessment**

Following the initial contact with the District Missions Director, you will be scheduled for a Church Planter Assessment. You and your spouse will undergo a Behavioral Assessment Interview. Assessments usually begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:00 p.m. (lunch "on us" is included).

_____ **Step 2: Obtain District M.A.N.Y. Director Approval**

The M.A.N.Y. Director will review the results of the Assessment with the District Administrative Officers. The review will then be shared with those assessed (to pray and process any recommendations).

_____ **Step 3: Meet With Sectional Committee For Approval**

Initiate a meeting with the presbyter and sectional committee to approve the community selected. This should surface local support or objectives of area pastors.

_____ **Step 4: Make Application For A New Church Planting**

Here you give specific information concerning the location present supporters, finances, housing and your credential status. This form is to be mailed to the District Office M.A.N.Y. Department. Your M.A.N.Y. representative has the forms on file.

_____ **Step 5: Attend Boot Camp**

Both the New Church Planter and spouse must attend. You will be assigned a coach. Boot Camp will cover six areas that deal with your vision, spiritual gifts, ministries for evangelism, team building, connecting with pre-Christians and progress evaluation. You will also discover and learn the eight characteristics of natural church development.

_____ **Step 6: Submit New Church Planting Development Plan**

The M.A.N.Y. Director will review this to see that there is a vision and strategy plan in place. Why? Because spinning wheels is directionless motion. This development plan should include things like your vision, core values, budget, plan of action, church name, etc.

_____ **Step 7: Phase One Consideration By Administrative Officers**

This is when the Administrative Officers review your development plan, the sectional committee's recommendation, and put in the district's official minutes that you are "on your way" to plant a church in a specific community.

Step 8: New Church Planter Moves Into The Community, Gets A Job And Is Assigned A Coach

Once your budget is established, you will have an idea of your needed income from a job. A coach (or mentor) will be assigned that lives close enough to you to maintain contact as you proceed.

Step 9: New Church Planting Orientation

This will be with two or three other couples at the District Office or in our section. It is a great time of joy and learning. The Administrative Officers cover specific procedures dealing with Constitutions and Bylaws, taxes, housing allowance and secretary/treasurer responsibilities. You will also be given training guides for ushers, altar workers, board members, etc.

Step 10: Develop Four Or Five Small Groups In Homes Through the Community

This will become your core membership as you prepare to launch the New Church Planting. This foundational base must be developed before you launch or you will be preaching to yourself on opening day. Premature births most often lead to failure and closing of the NCP.

Step 11: Pre-start Events and Promo

This includes community outreach events to announce the birth of a New Church Planting. Tellstart and Outreach Marketing are tools available to help you get the word out! Keep no secrets and announce to all within reach what is about to happen in your town. Convoy of Hope is a great way to connect with the unchurched!

Step 12: Develop Your Core Leadership Team

Choose and train your ushers, greeters, altar workers, worship team, etc. Take nothing for granted, nothing! And remember: If you spend more time in selection, you'll spend less time in correction.

Step 13: Obtain Church Insurance

Prior to holding any public meetings, the church planter must obtain insurance through Emery & Webb, Inc. Whether you rent, own your own home or use any facility free of charge – you must have this insurance. This is to protect you, the district, and the landlord. Call or write Emery & Webb, 167 Main Street, Fishkill, NY 12524 (1-800-942-5818).

Step 14: Adopt A Children's and Youth Risk Management Policy

This is mandatory for safety and liability reasons. Many of our larger churches have excellent policies on hand for you to use as a guideline. Screen your workers before you trust them with anyone. Contact Emery & Webb to find out exactly what they recommend or require for your church model.

Step 15: Announce Church Launch To The Community

On the date established by you, announce and plan the Opening Rally with your sectional officers. Make the rally a time of celebration. Include the presentation of the Communion Set/Offering Plates Ensemble by Women's Ministries, the installation of the pastor, the Word, introduction of the pastor and family, and a fellowship afterwards. Key point – keep the rally spirited and invite the entire Section to join you.

Step 16: Phase-Two Approval By The Executive Presbytery

This will officially list the New Church Planting with the General Council. Headquarters now know that you exist as a church in your location.

Step 17: Cover The Legal And Practical Issues

1. Obtain a copy of the 501C-3 Form from the District Office.

As part of the Assemblies of God, your church will operate under the General Council's 501C-3 status. Individual churches are exempt from federal income tax without making formal application because this has already been done by the General Council office.

Individual churches **should not make application** for a federal tax exempt number. The General Council provides an umbrella 501 C-3 exemption for all Assemblies of God churches. For a copy of the exemption authorization for local churches, contact the District Secretary's office.

2. Apply for an EIN Number

You will need to cocomplete an application for your Employer Identification Number (EIN)- Form SS-4. You can complete the SS-4 form online (https://sa.www4.irs.gov/sa_vign/newFormSS4.do). You can also apply over the phone and get your number the same day. Paper applications are in the district M.A.N.Y. office as well. This number given to churches is to be used in the following manner:

- 1) Banks ask for the number when a checking account is opened.
- 2) The number permit the withholding of federal income taxes and social security (FICA) taxes from the wages of ministers and non-minister employees.

A church may obtain their own FIN number by requesting for SS-4 from the IRS.

Call 1-800-829-3676 or write:
Internal Revenue Service
Central Area Distribution Center
PO box 8903
Bloomington, IL 61702-8903

This form SS-4 must be mailed to the address for your state as noted on the form.

3. Apply for a State Sales Tax Exemption Number

These forms are also on file at the District Office.

4. Open a Church Checking Account

Take your 501C-3 and your EIN number to the bank to open your church checking account. The signature card for the account should include at least two signatures, plus the signature of the sectional treasurer.

Step 18: Apply for the STL Grant

Speed the Light (STL) will help you with funds for a sound system or video projection system. If you are either licensed or ordained through the AG and your church is less than two years old you may apply for this grant. STL will only release funds after the church is launched. You will receive the application form from the district office. For questions on STL equipment please contact our district Youth Ministries office.

Step 19: Apply For The BGMC Grant

Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade (BGMC) will help with a grant for GPH resources. If you are either licensed or ordained through the Assembly of God and your church is less than two years old you may apply for this grant. For questions on the BGMC grant please contact our district CE director.

Step 20: Set In Order Service

This is a special occasion, a duly called business meeting, to:

1. Adopt the District Affiliated Constitution and Bylaws
2. Establish an official membership
3. Elect trustees

Step 21: Adopt the Self-Governing Constitution and Bylaws

This gives the church the prerogative to choose or call its pastor, elect its officers and transact all other business pertaining to its life and conduct as a church.

Step 22: Incorporation

Incorporation allows you to buy, sell and hold property in the name of the church. A church or association that is not incorporated is considered to:

1. Have no legal existence
2. Cannot own property in its own name
3. Cannot enter into contracts or legal obligations
4. Cannot sue or be sued. Therefore, an association's members are personally liable for the acts of other members or agents of the association. Consequently, if someone sues the association, all assets of each member are liable to be forfeited.

The attractive feature about being incorporated is that all the officers are indemnified from personal legal liability in the event an unfortunate incident occurs when someone gets injured on church property or at a church-sponsored function. Without incorporation, many astute members who have significant means will not be inclined to serve on the official board due to their increased vulnerability. Proper forms and instructions for incorporation can be obtained from the District Secretary/Treasurer's office.

Step 23: General Council Affiliation

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This gives you the privilege of having a lay delegate from your membership the privilege of attending and voting at General Council business sessions.