

Voluntas Dei USA –Notes and Guidelines for the formation process (Updated 2016)

This is a summary of the yearly process for formation applications and renewals. A Narrative description can be found [here](#), and more information and guidebooks are available on the website.

Your role and responsibility in the IVD-USA formation process:

Each member in formation is expected to take responsibility for their own formation and ongoing growth in living out the spirituality of the Institute. You will receive support at the team, sector, district, and institute levels, but the ultimate responsibility for formation is yours. Each individual participating in a team, from potential members through members in Stability (and including persons spiritually affiliated), is expected to provide annual feedback through their responses to the Reflection / Renewal document questions. Those applying for Next steps in their Formation journey should work with their team members at or before their December meeting to complete their applications and seek team approval.

ANNUAL DOCUMENTATION: WHO TO SUBMIT TO, BY WHEN, AND WHAT FORMS TO USE:

All Formation materials e.g. (i) Next steps in Formation and (ii) Annual Reflections/Renewals are discussed and reviewed at the team meeting. Each person is then responsible to forward applications/renewal forms directly to the District Formation Director (Jamie Bono)

WHEN:

- **December team meeting:** This meeting time is for discussing each team member's status and what they need to do to either apply for (i) Next steps in Formation or to renew their status through an (ii) Annual Reflection/Renewal.
- **Members: January 1** - all team members submit annual reflection/renewal to their team facilitator
February 1st – all team members submit their applications to the District Director of Formation (Jamie Bono)

- *Applications for Aspirancy need to be in hard copy/written format, while other documents may be in electronic form.*
- **Team Facilitators (or their designee) - February 1st**: Date to send the compilation of all application and renewal materials to the District Formation Director ((i) and (ii) above) and team attendance rosters with brief one-line comments on each member to the sector as described below.
- **March 1** – IVD-USA District Formation Team will complete their review and present their deliberations to the District Council on the Friday morning of the annual March Plenary Gathering. Those who apply to move to next steps will be informed of the discernment of the Formation Team & District Council on April 1
- **August** – Formation steps and renewals of vows/commitments are celebrated with the entire IVD- USA community in the liturgies at the summer congress.

WHO / WHAT:

- All applications for Next Steps in Formation should be sent to the Formation Director.
 - [Application to enter Aspirancy](#) (A handwritten letter is required as part of the application)
 - [Application for Spiritual Affiliation](#) (A handwritten letter is part of the application)
 - [Application to enter Probation](#)
 - [Application to make 1st Vows or profess 1st Commitments](#)
 - [Application for Stability](#) (A handwritten statement is required as part of the application)
- Annual Reflections/Renewals, *Team Attendance Roster* with brief one-line comments on each member, and applications for stability must be sent to the Formation Director.
 - Annual Reflection/Renewal

****IMPORTANT** - Central Council (Canada) requires a yearly accounting of all members from Aspirancy through Stability and persons spiritually affiliated, including comments on participation and progress in Formation. There is a new requirement for Team Facilitators to submit an annual team attendance roster with comments, and those not accounted for are assumed to be inactive. Steps will be taken to verify their status and if necessary, their names may be removed from the active list of members or affiliates. It is through the Annual Reflection/Renewal process that the Sector formation facilitators maintain contact with *all* candidates, members, and persons spiritually affiliated, as they encourage, monitor and support their discernment and formation.**

NOTE 1: STAGES OF FORMATION AND THEIR TIME LIMITS

- **Observers / Inquirers** – this period should last **approximately one year**, and normally should not continue for more than two years. This period ends with (i) an application for either Aspirancy or Spiritual Affiliation, or (ii) a decision by the individual or the team that it is best not to enter the Institute at this time.
- **Aspirancy** – this period should last for **six months to two years**, and includes participation in a retreat. This period ends with (i) an application for Probation, or (ii) a decision by the individual or the team that it is best not to continue with the Institute at this time.
- **Probation** - this period lasts a **minimum of two years and a maximum of four years**, and includes participation in a retreat. This period ends with (i) an application to profess vows or make commitments, or (ii) a decision by the individual or the team that it is best not to continue with the Institute at this time.
- **Professed / Committed Members** – this period lasts a **minimum of five years** (four years for Religious making a transfer of vows) **and a maximum of seven years**, and includes participation in a retreat. This period ends with (i) an application for Stability which is forwarded to the Central Council, Canada for final approval, or (ii) a decision by the individual or the team that it is best not to continue with the

Institute at this time.

- **Stability** –Those in Stability continue to actively participate in ongoing formation, since formation is a lifelong journey towards perfect alignment of our will with the will of God. Those in Stability also fulfill the Annual Reflection / Renewal documentation requirement.
- **Persons Spiritually Affiliated** – Spiritual affiliation is granted through an application process similar to that for Aspirancy, and thereafter is renewed annually with support given by ones team members. The affiliate is to complete the Annual Reflection / Renewal document. There is no time limit to this stage of formation and the affiliate is strongly encouraged to study the Formation guides (particularly that of Aspirancy) for spiritual development.

NOTE 2: THE PRIMARY MEANS OF FORMATION

1. **Monthly team lessons** for all involved in the Institute, usually provided by the District (or Institute) and presented by the team facilitator.
2. [Formation guides](#) provided by the Institute for all individuals in the formation process (Aspirancy until Stability). Per the *Aspirant's Guide*, *“throughout your formation process, you yourself will be your prime source of formation. Yet you will not be left alone... It is important that you discuss the guides either with your entire team or with a member who will serve as mentor during your formation period.”*
3. **Active participation in team life** – attending and participating in monthly team meetings. In the words of our founder your team acts as a “school of formation.”
4. Formation continues at **District gatherings**. All in formation are
 - a. expected to attend the Annual Congress and one of the Sector gatherings.
 - b. expected to attend the three-day retreat at the beginning of the Annual Congress.