

## **GUIDANCE FOR WEDDING OFFICIANT PROCESS IN THE METRO D.C. AREA**

*Prepared April 2016 by the ELCA Metro D.C. Synod Office*

### **District of Columbia**

See: [www.dccourts.gov/internet/superior/org\\_family/marriagebureau.jsf](http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/superior/org_family/marriagebureau.jsf)

Pursuant to the "Marriage Officiant Amendment Act of 2013", the following persons or organizations are authorized or are candidates for authorization to perform marriages in the District of Columbia:

- (1) a judge or retired judge of any court of record;
- (2) the Clerk of the Court or such deputy clerks of the Courts as may, in writing be designated by the Clerk and approved by the Chief Judge of the Court;
- (3) a minister, priest, rabbi, or authorized person of any religious denomination or society (\$35 fee & application required);
- (4) for any religious society which does not by its own custom require the intervention of a minister for the celebration of marriages, a marriage may be solemnized in the manner prescribed and practiced in that religious society, with the license issued to, and returns to be made by, a person appointed by the religious society for that purpose (\$35 fee & application required);
- (5) a civil celebrant (\$35 fee & application required);
- (6) a temporary officiant (\$25 fee & application required);
- (7) Members of the Council;
- (8) the Mayor of the District of Columbia; or
- (9) the parties to the marriage (both parties to the marriage must apply in person with a valid government issued identification).

All officiants are required to be at least 18 years old in order to perform a marriage ceremony. Further information can be obtained directly from the DC Code § 46-406.

The form can be mailed in if it is notarized.

*DC Superior Court  
Marriage Bureau  
500 Indiana Avenue NW, Room 4485  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Phone: 202.879.1212*

### **Maryland**

Ceremonies can be performed by an official of a religious order (such as an ordained minister), the Clerk of the Circuit Court, a deputy clerk designated by the county administrative circuit court judge, a judge. See Family Law 2-406 for further detail. Maryland does not require celebrants to register with the state. However, it is crucial that the celebrant properly complete the license form and return it to our office within 5 days of performing the ceremony.

## Virginia

For religious marriage ceremony, ministers, priests and clergy must be authorized to perform marriages by a Virginia Circuit Court. Out-of-state ministers must be authorized by a Virginia Circuit Court to perform marriage ceremonies in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This process can take up to four weeks to be completed. It is advised that the out-of-state minister contact the Circuit Court for the County where the marriage is to take place for further details

Examples of county information:

Fairfax County - [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/circuit/religious\\_celebrant.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/circuit/religious_celebrant.htm)

Prince William - [www.pwcgov.org/government/courts/circuit/Pages/Celebrant-Information.aspx](http://www.pwcgov.org/government/courts/circuit/Pages/Celebrant-Information.aspx)

Also needed to complete the authorization:

- Complete notarized petition and questionnaire.
- Copy of the ordination certificate or notarized letter stating date and location of ordination
- Notarized letter on office stationery from the Synod Office. (Katharyn Wheeler on staff is a notary.)
- Filing fee paid at time of filing – no personal checks, only cashier checks and money orders accepted by mail made out to Clerk of the Circuit Court.