

Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Commitment of Ministerial Search Team Members

The seven-member Ministerial Search Team leads a months-long discernment process that, while demanding, is deeply meaningful. Calling a settled minister is among the most significant decisions a congregation makes, and those who serve on the search team often emerge with a richer understanding of their community's values, challenges, and hopes — and of themselves.

Search Team Roles and Time Commitment

The search team decides who will hold certain roles and have oversight over certain tasks, such as: chair, communications, web specialist, congregational assessment coordinator, small group meetings/focus groups coordinator, search profile coordinator, interview coordinator pre-candidating weekends coordinator, and candidating week coordinator. It's important to know that the UUA's Ministry Search Handbook is very thorough and provides guidance for each step of the process. Search teams also receive extensive, ongoing support from the UUA Transitions Office.

The time commitment for a search team member varies based upon the role the search team member takes on, whether the team is laser-focused or takes its time with tasks and meetings, and the number of applicants. This is a broad estimate of the amount of time search team members will need to commit between June 2026 and May 2027:

- July or August: Engage in a 1–2-day retreat with programming led by UUA staff
- August through September-October: meet weekly for planning and discussion (~8 hours each month), conduct surveys and hold small group meetings (~15 hours each month)
- November: evaluate survey/ small group meeting findings, write the congregational record: (~30 hours)
- December: it's possible for the search team to take significant time off if they work ahead to assemble the documents packet and make plans for interviews and discernment meetings in January
- January: first three weeks are extremely busy with initial evaluation of applicants: read each ministerial record, review applicants' websites, decide whom to interview, conduct interviews and reference checks, narrow list of applicants down to 3 pre-candidates (~40 hours)
- February-March: three full weekends in a six-week period with precandidates (interviews, social time and a tour of the church building, and seeing ministers preach in other congregations via the web), plus a week of follow-up and final discernment. This is an especially important time for all search team members to be available

- Last week of March: final discussions and rankings of pre-candidates before offer date: ~5 hours
- Early April: planning for candidate week: ~10 hours
- Late April: candidate week activities do not need to be planned or attended by all search team members, though search team coordination and some presence is expected (~15 hours)