



DIOCESE OF THE SOUTH
Orthodox Church in America
PO Box 191109 Dallas, TX 75219
office@dosoca.org | 214-522-4149
www.dosoca.org



MISSION-STATION INTAKE PROCESS

1. Informal conversations surrounding the establishment of an OCA Mission Parish in any part of the diocese are encouraged, and the role of the Dean and parish priest is to look for opportunities to evangelize through church planting. While it proper for Christians to pray together within and outside of liturgical services, it should be noted that, in our tradition, nothing is to be done “without the knowledge of the bishop.”
 - a. Therefore, all efforts to move toward the establishment of anything more formal than an occasional Bible Study or prayer service should adhere to the following protocol.
 - b. No formal efforts, including the collection of funds to establish a future mission, should commence before the initiation of an officially named mission station to include financial contributions toward any mission fund that might support a potential effort.
2. The Dean, in conjunction with (Diocesan Administration / Diocesan Hierarch ??), should document the feasibility of a mission station before it is formally established, taking into account:
 - a. The need and demand for an English-language mission station in the city/town/area. This should take into account existing Orthodox presence, the population of the Metropolitan Statistical Area etc.
 - b. The ability of an eventual parish in the area to be self-sustaining.
 - c. Any political agendas that might be driving the request for a new mission (e.g. is the effort the result of “disgruntled” or disobedient parishioners at another, reasonably healthy English language parish).
 - d. Geographical proximity to other Orthodox parishes, taking into account average commute times, population density et. al.
 - e. The presence of more than one foundational family in order to avoid the success or failure of the endeavor resting on the shoulders of a single entity.
 - f. How receptive have interested parties been to Vespers or Bible studies in the homes of interested parties?
 - g. Other pertinent observations surrounding informal or organic interest in an English Language Orthodox presence in the city/town/area.
3. A formal report, taking into account the above factors should be submitted by the Dean to Diocesan Administration for consideration, and the Diocesan Hierarch will either approve or deny the petition.



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4. Occasional liturgical services may, after episcopal approval, begin at the discretion of the Dean and supporting / mother parish.
 5. Once the mission station has been approved, and **before** formal operations of the mission station commence, the founding members and lay leadership, in conjunction with the Dean, should assure that:
 - a. A generic, mission email address and “virtual” phone number (e.g. Google Voice or other) is established for official communication, assuring an always accessible line of communication even if founding members depart.
 - b. A system for storing critical, mission related materials online in a secure manner should be established (e.g. Google Drive associated with the parish email account).
 - c. All proper paperwork should be filed to include:
 - i. Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State (using the parish email address and phone number mentioned above) to include a current copy of the DOS Uniform Parish Bylaws if allowed by the Secretary of State. The name of the mission station in articles of organization should follow the format [CITYNAME] Mission of the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of the South.
 1. This name with the Secretary of State may be changed formally when the mission is granted a formal name.
 2. If the mission station is granted a formal name and mission status, the mission may elect to file an “assumed name” or dba (Doing Business As) entity name with the proper municipal authorities and in accordance with state statute.
 - ii. Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS.
 - d. Internal documentation of all lay-leaders and their contact information should be completed and filed.
 - e. Any financial contributions to the mission station between the period of hierarchical blessing and the completion of all official paperwork should be directed to a designated fund at the mother parish to be held in trust and will constitute the initial deposit into a formal bank account that is opened in step 6 below.
 6. Once the previous steps are complete, the Dean should send:
 - a. A copy of all official Articles of Organization filed and approved by the Secretary of State.
 - b. The EIN approval from the IRS (to be filed with the OCA)



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- c. Contact information for the parish (email / phone) and a list of lay leaders.
 - d. Physical address of the mission station (if one exists)
 - e. Acknowledgement by the mission station's acting treasurer and the Dean of the DOS Tithing processes as dictated by approved accounting and calculation forms provided by the DOS Treasurer.
7. **[Only] after** the above steps are complete, the mission station should establish:
- a. A web presence to include all pertinent location, service schedule and leadership information. Ideally you would use a hosting service such as Squarespace.com or Wix.com that facilitates administration of the site by non-technical volunteers.
 - b. A bank account that provides easily utilized online banking services to include bill payment or ACH funds transfer.¹
8. Publicly announced, organized and coordinated liturgical services, lay or clergy led, should only commence after the steps above have been completed.

¹ No "mission planting funds" or other financial contributions should be made to the mission before all elements of step 5



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CHECKLIST:

PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATIONAL TASKS:

- [] Dean should draft a Feasibility Report from Dean on items 2a – 2g
- [] Feasibility Report sent to administration@dosoca.org
- [] Generic (e.g. Gmail) mission email address is established for the mission. Document this in mission records as the “informational” email address for the mission.
- [] Virtual Phone number (e.g. Google Voice) phone number setup and verified operable. Document this in mission records as the phone number for the mission.
- [] Establish a location where all digital, parish documents will be stored and organized (e.g. a Google Drive, Dropbox or other cloud based storage system – this can be linked to a Gmail address for the mission). All mission legal documents, real estate contracts, members rosters etc. should be scanned and stored in this location.
- [] Articles of Organization filed appropriately with the Secretary of State (to include Uniform Parish Bylaws if the state allows association of bylaws with articles).
- [] Request an EIN number with the IRS
- [] Document all lay-leaders and their contact information, and send a copy of this to administration@dosoca.org and office@dosoca.org

SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTATION TO DIOCESE (these may be “bundled” and sent together):

- [] Upon receipt, the EIN paperwork should be scanned and sent to info@oca.org, administration@dosoca.org and office@dosoca.org
- [] When Articles are received, these should be sent to administration@dosoca.org and office@dosoca.org
- [] Send a list of all lay leaders in the mission to administration@dosoca.org and office@dosoca.org
- [] Send the mission’s physical address and mailing address (if different) to administration@dosoca.org and office@dosoca.org .
- [] Have the parish treasurer and senior lay leader draft and sign a letter acknowledging their understanding of the DOS Tithing process and calculation forms, and send to treasurer@dosoca.org, accounting@dosoca.org, administration@dosoca.org and office@dosoca.org .

FINAL TASKS (Complete only after organizational and recording steps above are complete):



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- [] Establish the parish web presence with (at a minimum) the standards noted above.
 - [] Open a bank account in the mission's name using the requirements in the guidelines.