

GUIDELINES FOR CHAPLAINCY

Overview

Chaplains often serve in a non-denominational, interfaith capacity, or non-religious capacity. Specific requirements are dependent on the context within which the chaplain serves. Resources at the end of this document may provide a starting place for further information although a quick search on the internet will provide information for a particular context. Some contexts, such as branches of the military, may provide financial support for ministerial training.

General Requirements

1. Undergraduate Education
2. Graduate Education
3. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)
4. Faith Community Endorsement
5. Work Experience
6. Competencies
7. Code of Ethics
8. Fingerprints and Background Check

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a form of professional education for ministry, particularly in settings like hospitals, hospices, and churches. It focuses on developing spiritual care skills through hands-on practice (action), clinical supervision (reflection), and academic study, and applying those reflections to practice. CPE aims to equip individuals, including clergy and lay people, to provide spiritual support and care to those in need, including patients, families, and staff in various settings.

CPE emphasizes developing skills in providing spiritual care, including listening, empathy, and understanding during times of crisis. CPE often involves students from various faith traditions and collaborating with other healthcare professionals. Many CPE programs are rooted in a Biblical Christian perspective, emphasizing compassion, love, and service although the focus in chaplaincy is on supporting people wherever they may be in their faith journey. CPE seeks to help individuals understand where their history intersects and informs interactions with others, seeking to understand others in their own words and contexts. CPE helps form one's pastoral identity and promotes healthy boundaries in caregiving.

One (1) unit of CPE is required by the diocese for those seeking ordination. One unit of CPE consists of 100 educational hours and 300 clinical hours. A degree is not required.

One unit of CPE is often the minimum requirement for serving as a chaplain, although requirements may be more informal in smaller rural communities. A minimum of four units are required to become board certified. Paid internships and residencies may be available as part of the process. There are four basic units although more units may be completed to continue training.

Level 1 covers basic learning objectives.

Level 2 addresses advanced learning educational objectives and outcomes.

Level 3 continues learning and application of educational objectives and generally offers increased responsibility as a chaplain.

Level 4 continues to focus on education, application, outcomes, and offers an opportunity to apply to become board certified.

Chaplains serve in diverse settings

The following list offers examples of where chaplains serve. We suggest that you research further the setting you seek to explore, as each has specific certifications tailored to its ministry context. The resources below provide helpful links as an aid to your research.

Hospitals A Chaplain might offer spiritual support to the patients, families or staff as needed.

Prisons A Chaplain might bring comfort to a prisoner or the family.

Homeless shelters A Chaplain might bring comfort to the families or a sounding board to the residents.

Workplaces A Chaplain might bring comfort to a worker for various reasons.

Churches Chaplaincy education enhances the effectiveness, compassion, spiritual growth, counseling and outreach priest and deacons.

Addiction recovery A Chaplain may provide counseling services.

VA and Military A chaplain might provide religious services and counseling to service members.

First Responders Police and fire departments generally provide access to a chaplain to provide support following difficult situations. Chaplains may also be part of Critical Incidence Stress Management (CISM) teams responding to crises in schools, workplaces, and communities.

Roles

Assessment Chaplains assess the needs of clients, including needs for continuing support, as well as the resources the clients already have available.

Supportive presence Chaplains provide empathetic listening and companion with people at a particular part of their journey. Spiritual guidance and counseling may be part of this depending on the qualifications of the chaplain and legal requirements of the state or ministry setting.

Rituals Chaplains are often called upon to perform rituals including baptism, marriage, funerals, and memorial services.

Education Chaplains may be called upon to provide education to other professionals with whom they collaborate in their ministry setting.

Ethics Chaplains may serve on bioethics committees in their ministry settings.

Referrals Chaplains serve people of all faiths and many with no faith affiliation. Chaplains do not proselytize. They often provide referrals to religious leaders of other faiths or for future care of a client's spiritual needs.

Episcopal Ecclesiastical Endorsement

When applying for board certification:

- Notify the bishop that you are seeking ecclesiastical endorsement
- Apply for endorsement through the ecclesiastical endorser of the national Episcopal Church: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/healthcare-chaplaincies/>
- Safe Church must be up to date (universal and specialty modules)
- Church's teaching on anti-racism must be up to date
- The ecclesiastical endorser will work with the bishop to complete the process.
- The bishop will send an endorsement letter to the ecclesiastical endorser and confirm that Safe Church and Anti-racism training is up to date
- The ecclesiastical endorser will send ecclesiastical endorsement to the chaplain

Resources

Association of Professional Chaplains (BCCI-Board of Chaplaincy Certification Inc)

<https://www.apchaplains.org/>

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education

<https://acpe.edu/>

Spiritual Care Association <https://www.spiritualcareassociation.org/>

International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. <https://icisf.org/>

American Correctional Chaplains Association

<https://www.americancorrectionalchaplainsinc.org/>