

A Guide to Varying Endorsement Requirements

Spiritual commitment, character, emotional stability and social skills are essential qualities that everyone we endorse must possess. Other requirements, for example the amount of educational and ministerial experience can vary depending on the type of chaplaincy position sought. Traditionally, the requirements set by the institution that hires the chaplain applicant influences what we require for endorsement. How we judge an applicant for military chaplaincy may not be the same as the way we measure an applicant for hospital chaplaincy. Requirements for prison chaplaincy may differ from what we would look for in endorsing a Fire & Rescue chaplain. To bring clarity to the multiplicity of standards, the following listing of requirements may be helpful.

1. Military Chaplaincy and Civil Air Patrol

- Master of Divinity degree or equivalent
- Two years of ministerial experience, post-M.Div. for active duty chaplains
- Post-M.Div. ministerial experience not required for Reserve and National Guard chaplains
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is not required but is considered helpful

2. Veterans Administration

- Master of Divinity degree or equivalent
- Ministerial experience not required
- Two units of CPE are a minimum

3. Hospital and Hospice

- Generally some kind of Masters degree, not necessarily an M.Div.
- Some hiring institutions require an initial application for certification by the Association of Professional Counselors – which means a minimum of two units of CPE.
- A few hiring institutions do not require a Masters degree or CPE training

4. Prisons

- Federal prisons require an M.Div. or equivalent
- Federal prisons require at least one unit of CPE
- Each state sets its requirements for state prisons. Some may require an M.Div. and CPE and some may not

5. Police and Sheriff's Departments, Fire & Rescue, Corporations, Retirement Homes and Urban Ministry

- There are no set standards. Some may expect a Masters degree; most are happy with a Bachelors degree
- They may or may not require CPE