

## Training Required for Federally Employed Chaplains

	Army <sup>A</sup>	Navy <sup>B</sup>	Air Force <sup>C</sup>	National Guard <sup>D</sup>	Federal Prisons <sup>E</sup>	Veterans Administration <sup>F</sup>
<b>Degree</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Baccalaureate degree, ≥ 120 semester hours</li> <li>•Graduate degree in theological or religious studies</li> <li>•≥ 72 semester hours in graduate work in theological or religious studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•4-year Bachelor's degree<sup>8</sup></li> <li>•Graduate degree in theological or related studies- ≤ 72 semester hours or 108 quarter hours of graduate-level work, 2/3 of those hours in residence<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Bachelor's degree, ≥ 120 semester hours<sup>11</sup></li> <li>•M. Div. or equivalent theological degree, ≥ 72 hours<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Bachelor's degree (≥ 120 semester hours)</li> <li>•Accredited Master's degree ≥ 72 semester hours (36 semester hours must be in theology)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accredited undergrad degree<sup>18</sup></li> <li>•M. Div. or equivalent<sup>19</sup></li> <li>•20 graduate hours each of: theology, sacred writings, church history/ comparative religions, and ministry courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•M. Div. or specific, equivalent education qualifications<sup>20</sup></li> <li>•Specialized positions require additional knowledge, skills and abilities<sup>21</sup></li> </ul>
<b>CPE</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	•2 units <sup>22</sup>
<b>Work Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•≥ 2 years of full-time professional experience<sup>1</sup> (N/A for Army Reserve)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•2 years full-time religious leadership experience compatible with the duties of a RMP in their respective RO, relevant to settings of military chaplaincy<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•2 years of religious ministry leadership experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Attend the CH-BOLC<sup>16</sup></li> <li>•3-month course can be completed in 1 block or in several phases over a 24-month period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•≥ 2 years autonomous experience as a religious/ spiritual leader in a parish or specialized ministry setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GS-11: need ≥ 2 years of professional experience after M. Div.; can include guided pastoral experience, doctoral degree<sup>23</sup></li> <li>•≥ 1 extra year for GS-12<sup>24</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Endorsement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ecclesiastical endorsement from your faith group<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ecclesiastical Endorsement from a DoD-recognized endorser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ecclesiastical Endorsement from a DoD-recognized endorser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Federally recognized ecclesiastical endorsement from your denomination or faith group<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ordination/ membership ecclesiastical religious institute of vowed men or women</li> <li>•Ecclesiastical endorsement by recognized endorsing body of the faith tradition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecclesiastical endorsement from the designated national endorsing official of his/her faith group or denomination<sup>25</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Active duty- MUST be U.S. citizens.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>•Permanent residents- ONLY Army Reserve<sup>4</sup></li> <li>•National Agency Security Clearance<sup>5</sup></li> <li>•Physical exam at a MEPS<sup>6</sup></li> <li>•Age limits<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•U.S. citizen, no dual citizenship</li> <li>•No violations of privileged communication /confidentiality</li> <li>•No violations/ compromises of noncombatant status</li> <li>•No convictions by courts<sup>13</sup></li> <li>•No relevant disciplinary action<sup>14</sup></li> <li>•Age limits<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mentally and physically fit</li> <li>•Must be a U.S. Citizen only</li> <li>•Be able to obtain a secret security clearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Willingness to provide and coordinate programs for inmates of all faiths</li> <li>•Necessary credentials and the ability to provide worship services in his/her faith tradition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CPE equiv.: 800 hours supervised ministry<sup>26</sup></li> <li>•Non-citizens: only when no qualified U.S. citizens<sup>27</sup></li> <li>•Must be proficient in written and spoken English</li> <li>•Males born after 12/31/59 need to be registered with the draft<sup>28</sup></li> </ul>

## Sources

- A. Information found at: <https://www.goarmy.com/chaplain/about/requirements.html>
- B. Information found at: <https://www.navy.com/careers/chaplain-support/chaplain#ft-qualifications-&-requirements>
- C. Information found at: <https://www.airforce.com/careers/specialty-careers/chaplain>
- D. Information found at: <https://www.nationalguard.com/chaplain>
- E. Information found at: <https://www.bop.gov/jobs/positions/index.jsp?p=Chaplain>
- F. Information found at: [https://www.patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/docs/VA\\_Chaplain\\_Qualification\\_Requirements\\_Application\\_Procedures\\_508.pdf](https://www.patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/docs/VA_Chaplain_Qualification_Requirements_Application_Procedures_508.pdf)

## Notes

1. A minimum of two years of full-time professional experience, validated by the applicant's endorsing agency.
2. This endorsement should certify that you are: A clergy person in your denomination or faith group. Qualified spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally to serve as a chaplain in the Army. Sensitive to religious pluralism and able to provide for the free exercise of religion by all military personnel, their family members and civilians who work for the Army.
3. Applicants for active duty or the National Guard MUST be U.S. citizens.
4. Permanent residents can ONLY apply for the Army Reserve.
5. Be able to receive a favorable National Agency Security Clearance.
6. Pass a physical exam at one of the Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS).
7. Must be at least 21 years of age, but younger than 42 at time of Regular Army commissioning or less than 45 at time of Army Reserve commissioning. Prior service applicants with at least 3 years of prior AFS or creditable USAR service must be younger than 47 at time of Army Reserve commissioning.
8. Have a bachelor's degree from a qualified four-year undergraduate educational institution.
9. Have a graduate degree in theological or related studies from an accredited educational institution (note that a qualifying degree program requires no fewer than 72 semester hours or 108 quarter hours of graduate-level work with 2/3 of those course hours completed in residence; also note that related studies may include graduate courses in pastoral counseling, social work, religious administration and similar disciplines when one-half of the earned credits include topics in general religion, world religions, the practice of religion, theology, religious philosophy, religious ethics and/or the foundational writings from the applicant's religious tradition)
10. RMP: Religious Ministry Professional; RO: Religious Organizations (RO).
11. Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a minimum of 120 semester hours.
12. Master of Divinity or equivalent theological degree with no less than 72 hours from an accredited institution.
13. No convictions by courts-martial or by civilian courts (except for minor traffic violations or similar infractions).
14. No record of disciplinary action for failure to exercise sound judgment with respect to morale or welfare of subordinates; No disciplinary action for engaging in an unprofessional or inappropriate relationship; No record of disciplinary action for financial irresponsibility, domestic violence or child abuse.
15. Must be between the ages of 18 and 40.
16. Attend the Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course (CH-BOLC), where you'll learn fundamental military tasks and how to perform religious duties in a military environment.
17. Obtain a federally recognized ecclesiastical endorsement from your denomination or faith group certify that you: The chaplain is an ordained minister or member in good standing of the respective denomination or body; The chaplain has completed a certain number of years of

ministry experience; The denomination approves of the chaplain serving as a military chaplain; Are qualified spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally; Are sensitive to religious pluralism and able to provide for the free exercise of religion by all military personnel and their family members.

18. Undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university.
19. A Master of Divinity degree or the equivalent education from an American Theological School (ATS) accredited residential seminary or school of theology.
20. All applicants must possess the degree of Master of Divinity or equivalent educational qualifications. Equivalent educational qualifications means possession of a bachelor's degree of at least 120 semester hours plus completion of not less than 70 semester hours of graduate course work which included all of the following: 20 semester hours in pastoral ministry; 20 semester hours in any combination of theology, ethics and philosophy of religion; 20 semester hours in the study of sacred writings, including the study of languages in which sacred writings are/were written; 10 semester hours in religious history and/or world religions. To meet federal requirements, education must be from college(s), university(ies), or theological institution(s) that are accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Department of Education has a database of accredited institutions on the Internet at: <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>.
21. Positions with specialized clinical assignments, such as mental health or substance abuse, require additional applicable knowledge, skills, and abilities.
22. In addition to the education requirements, applicants must have completed at least 2 units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in program(s) accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) or, the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC). Training in other programs will be considered on a case-by-case basis for equivalency.
23. To qualify for GS-11, you must have at least two years of professional experience, after completion of the M. Div. or equivalent, which has demonstrated both practical pastoral knowledge and skill, and ability to minister in a pluralistic setting. Supervised or guided pastoral experience completed during graduate professional education may be credited for up to one of the two years of experience. Part time experience is pro-rated by comparing the average number of hours worked to a 40-hour workweek. Completion of a doctoral degree directly related to pastoral ministry may be substituted for one year of experience.
24. For GS-12, in addition to the requirements for GS-11, at least one additional year of professional experience, equivalent in complexity and responsibility to the GS-11 level, which has demonstrated all of the following: (a) Ability to serve as a consultant or expert to an interdisciplinary treatment team; (b) in-depth knowledge of related professional fields, particularly in the behavioral sciences; (c) understanding of, and ability to respond to, the particular concerns and issues pertaining to treatment of veterans; (d) Knowledge of the structure, regulations, practices, and programs of health care delivery systems; (e) Ability to interpret and apply a body of rules, regulations, policies, and procedures in professional practice; (f) Ability to develop and maintain liaisons with a variety of outside organizations.
25. Must possess ecclesiastical endorsement, dated within the past 12 months, from the designated national endorsing official of his/her faith group or denomination. Ecclesiastical endorsement is the written official statement of the endorsing body certifying that the applicant is in good standing with the faith group or denomination and that the individual is, in the opinion of the endorsing body, qualified to perform the full range of ministry required in the VA pluralistic setting. Endorsements are only accepted from the nationally designated official. If someone does not know who their ecclesiastical endorser is for their faith group, they check the list on line at [www.va.gov/chaplain](http://www.va.gov/chaplain). Select "Employment Information" then scroll down to the "List of Ecclesiastical Endorsers." If they do not find their faith group on the list, they can phone the National VA Chaplain Center at (757) 728-7069.
26. 800 hours of supervised ministry in a formal training program, which incorporated both ministry formation and pastoral care skills development, is required for equivalency to two units of CPE.

27. Non-citizens may only be considered for employment as a chaplain when there are no qualified U.S. citizens available for a position.
28. By law, all males born after December 31, 1959 must have registered with the selective service system (the draft) or have a valid exemption.