What Are Chaplains Learning?
Perspectives on the Supply Side
A Working Paper

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Abstract

Employers, practitioners, educators, and leaders in the field of chaplaincy have differing views about the training chaplains need in order to do their jobs well. This article begins to map the "supply side" of chaplaincy, a complex array of organizations, agencies, and institutions that train and credential chaplains. Drawing on curricular materials, archival documents, and interviews from the supply-side, we show how professional chaplains are trained to work in some sectors in the United States, what they learn, and what institutions are involved in the process. We focus primarily on workplace settings where chaplains are required by law – the military, federal prisons, and the Veterans Administration.[1] These employers typically expect theological schools and endorsers to prepare and vet individuals in the specifics of their own faith traditions. They see clinical programs focusing on hands-on experience engaging in diverse and pluralistic settings. They see their own training – employer or sector-specific – focused on aspects of organizational culture, including how to effectively provide spiritual care in individual contexts. Federal employers generally agree that new chaplains need more and better training in crisis intervention, moral injury, and the work of pluralistic and increasingly non-religious workplaces. We suggest theological schools and clinical training programs integrate these topics into required training. While the training organizations on the supply side of chaplaincy and spiritual care do share some important learning objectives, they do not work as a collective, efficient network to help build a workforce of chaplains with a consistent set of skills to best strengthen the field.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic brought chaplains from the proverbial margins, where they have historically worked, to the front pages of newspapers across the country. In the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Newsweek* and other national media sources, they were profiled

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"running towards the dying rather than away," supporting anxious healthcare providers and communicating with family members not permitted to be with their loved ones, even in their final moments.[2] The crisis brought military chaplains—often accustomed to working with mass casualties—into dialogue with healthcare chaplains quickly adapting to sustained, multiple deaths due to the pandemic. It highlighted common issues of fear, grief, trauma and uncertainty seen by chaplains who work with people from prisons to nursing homes to colleges and universities across the country.[3]

While public attention to the work of chaplains during the pandemic was new, the work itself has long historical precedents. From the military to prisons to healthcare and higher education, chaplaincy has a clear – if not widely known – history in the United States.[4] Chaplains are currently required by law in the military, federal prisons, and the Veterans Administration. In her book *A Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law*, religious studies scholar Winnifred Sullivan calls chaplains and spiritual care providers "secular priests" or "ministers without portfolios," arguing that chaplains are "strangely necessary figure[s]…in negotiating the public life of religion today."[5] A national survey conducted in 2019 found that 21% of Americans had had contact with a chaplain in the past two years. More than half of those encounters had taken place in healthcare organizations.[6]

This paper focuses on how professional chaplains are trained to work in the United States, what they learn, and which institutions are involved in the process.[7] We focus primarily on the military, federal prisons, and the Veterans Administration, where chaplains are required by law. While chaplains are presented across American society, there are differing assumptions, understandings, and perspectives about who they are and what they do. We begin aware that there is no commonly accepted definition of chaplain in American religious life; the *Oxford*

English Dictionary (OED) defines chaplain along very narrow, historical lines, calling a chaplain first "the priest, clergyman [sic] or minister of a chapel" and then, "Clergyman [sic] who conducts religious services in the private chapel of a sovereign, lord or high official…" but the term refers to a much broader group in common usage. Historically, chaplains were largely white, male, and Christian. The field has diversified slowly with people of color remaining underrepresented.[8] Chaplains today include people from a broad range of religious backgrounds and their work includes listening, counseling, advising and supporting people in the institutions they serve.[9] While chaplains today range from volunteers with limited formal training in religion to highly trained professionals with multiple academic degrees, we focus here on professionals who are trained and paid for their work. The requirements for professional chaplaincy positions vary by setting and are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Chaplaincy Hiring Requirements[10]

Sector	Experience	Ecclesiastical Endorsement	CPE	Education	Other
Military[2]	≥ 2 yrs of professional ministry experience	Mandatory	-	BA, MDiv (or equivalent graduate degree of ≥ 72 semester hours) from an accredited institution.	Ordained clergy or equivalent; Officer training; medical and physical standards; age restrictions and other specifications by branch.
Veterans Affairs[3]	≥ 2000 hrs of experience, as required for board certification	Mandatory	4 units from a Department of Education accredited CPE program	BA, MDiv (or equivalent graduate theological degree) from an accredited institution.	U.S. Citizenship; Board certification by the Board of Chaplaincy Certification Inc (BBCI). Certification from a nationally recognized body that uses BCCI competencies and qualifications or has reciprocity with BCCI is also acceptable.
Corrections (Federal Bureau of Prisons)[4]	≥ 2 years of professional ministry experience	Mandatory	-	BA, MDiv (or equivalent graduate theological degree of ≥ 80 credit hours) from an accredited institution.	Religious credentialing (ordination, commissioning, or licensed); Ordinarily < 37 years old; physical standards; meet suitability in terms employment, financial, and criminal history. The American Correctional Association recommends CPE.[5]
Corrections (*Municipal*)	-	Mandatory	-	BA, MDiv (or equivalent graduate theological degree of ≥ 80 credit hours) from an accredited institution.	American Correctional Association recommends CPE.[6] 1 Unit of CPE (or equivalent) and endorsement is required for Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities.[7]
Healthcare	-	-	-	-	No national or local standards. Chaplain jobs increasingly require board certification as a chaplain which generally requires master's level academic training, clinical experience in CPE, work experience as a chaplain and a rigorous peer

[2] "Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments (DODI 1304.28)" (Department of Defense, 2014). For specific information on each branch see:
Army https://www.goarmy.com/chaplain/become-an-army-chaplain/requirements.html
Navy https://www.Navy.com/careers/Navy-chaplain#ft-qualifications-&-requirements
Air Force https://www.airforce.com/careers/specialty-careers/chaplain
National Guard https://www.nationalguard.com/chaplain
[3] "VA HANDBOOK 5005/135" (Washington, DC: Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020).
[4] "Program Statement (3939.07)" (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2001).
[5] *Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions*, 4th edition (Lanham, MD: American Correctional Association, 2003).
[6] *Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions*.
[7] "5.5 Religious Practices," Operations Manual (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2011), https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-standards/2011/5-5.pdf.

					review process to confirm competence.[8]
Law Enforcement	-	-	-	-	No national or local standards. International Conference of Police Chaplains recommends a background check, religious endorsement, and > 5 years of experience.[9] Professional associations provide additional training opportunities.
Fire Department	-	-	-	-	No national or local standards. Professional associations provide additional training opportunities.[10]
Disaster Chaplaincy	-	-	-	-	No national or local standards. The Red Cross requires disaster spiritual care chaplains to be one of the following: (1) a chaplain from a national voluntary organization active in disaster; (2) a board-certified chaplain; (3) a professional chaplain; or (4) or an endorsed leader of a local faith community.[11] The Red Cross provides additional training, and other disaster organizations may require Crisis Incident Stress Management training.[12]
Workplace Chaplaincy	-	-	-	-	No national or local standards. Professional associations provide additional training opportunities.[13]
Transportation Chaplaincy	-	-	-	-	No national or local standards. Professional associations provide additional training opportunities.[14]

[8] Wendy Cadge et al., "Training Healthcare Chaplains: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 73, no. 4 (December 1, 2019): 211–21, https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305019875819.
[9] "International Conference of Police Chaplains," accessed January 18, 2021, http://www.icpc4cops.org/chaplaincy-intro/chaplains-work.html.
[10] Federation of Fire Chaplains, "FFC Training Institute," accessed January 28, 2021, https://ffc.wildapricot.org/Institute.
[11] "Disaster Spiritual Care Standards and Procedure" (The American Red Cross, 2015), https://crisisplumbline.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/dsc-standardsandprocedures.pdf.
[12] "Disaster Relief Chaplaincy," Baptist Convention of New England, accessed January 19, 2021, https://www.bcne.net/chaplain.
[13] "Training Academy," Marketplace Chaplains, accessed January 28, 2021, https://mchapusa.com/training-academy/.
[14] "Training and Development," International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains, accessed January 20, 2021, https://www.iacac.aero/.

Campus Chaplaincy	-	-	-	-	No national or local standards. Professional associations recommend that campus chaplains have professional training, including a graduate level degree, CPE training, and religious endorsement.[15]

Most professional chaplains are trained in theological schools as well as in clinical training programs and sector-specific programs. Historically, chaplaincy training has also been largely Christian-centric though in recent years non-Christian degree programs have emerged alongside third space trainings, like in movement chaplaincy training.[11] In addition to training, many employers of chaplains require endorsement, the formal support of a chaplain's religious organization. Many chaplains also engage—by necessity or choice—in continuing education. We map the range of organizations involved in this training and, more importantly, the skills and competencies they prepare chaplains to have. We call this map the "supply side," the places and ways in which chaplains are trained ("supplied") for professional positions. Most chaplains train to work in a specific setting (e.g., the military or healthcare) and it is rare for chaplains to move across sectors over the course of their careers. We map and analyze supply with an eye both to how chaplains are trained to meet the demands of their constituents, where the skills and competencies chaplains need to work effectively in different settings overlap and diverge, how that training is informed more by the past than the future, and how this training might be institutionally streamlined to more consistently and efficiently prepare individuals to do the work of chaplaincy for today and tomorrow's demographic realities.

[15] "Standards and Guidelines for Chaplaincy," National Association of College and University Chaplains, accessed January 20, 2021, http://web.archive.org/web/20190308033703/https://www.nacuc.net/standards.

Based on archival and interview data collected for this study, as well as insights from prior studies, we find that there is some overlap in training across theological schools, post-hire sector-specific training, and clinical training programs. Federal employers typically expect theological schools and endorsers to have prepared and vetted their chaplain candidates in the specifics of their faith tradition. Clinical programs such as clinical pastoral education (CPE) focus on helping chaplains gain hands-on experience in diverse and pluralistic settings that require them to understand and accommodate people from a range of religious faiths and backgrounds. At the federal level, only chaplains working in the Veterans Administration are currently required to have CPE training.

Employers, including each branch of the military, the Veterans Administration (VA), and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) also provide chaplains with their own training. This training focus on teaching new chaplain recruits organizational competencies, including how to provide spiritual care effectively in particular workplace contexts. Employers in this study generally agreed that sector-specific training will always be needed due to its focus on specific organizational needs, which are not topics theological schools or clinical training programs could cover.

In this study, those who employ and train chaplains suggest that there are three areas chaplains need better preparation and training in: crisis intervention, moral injury, and working in pluralistic and increasingly non-religious workplaces. Better training in these three areas would help lighten the load and burden of sector-specific trainings, as much of the initial entry-level work chaplains do involves counseling and caring for those from different religious backgrounds and those in crisis. Interviewees also discussed a gap between chaplains who graduate from mostly Christian theological institutions and the military recruits they will serve,

nearly half of whom explicitly identify as non-religious or have no religious affiliation. Such a gap illustrates that new chaplain recruits are not as well-prepared as they could be to care for an increasingly diverse demographic that, while still interested in spiritual matters, often does not identify with a particular religious tradition.

Background

Chaplains have long worked in the military, healthcare, prisons, municipal settings, workplaces, colleges and universities and a range of other settings.[12] In the United States, military chaplains date to the Revolutionary War. In prisons, healthcare organizations, and some colleges and universities, chaplains have been closely tied to the religious origins of institutions.[13] Scholarship on chaplains tends to focus on the sectors in which they work and says little about how the work itself varies by setting and institution. Some scholars have argued that chaplains' unique positions make a kind of marginality, or organizational "in-between-ness," a defining and consistent characteristic of their work.[14]

Chaplains have trained primarily in Christian theological schools alongside others preparing to work in Christian congregations. Until recently, few to no schools had separate curricula – or even classes – for students intending to become chaplains. All students were required to take core courses in pastoral care, which trained graduates to provide such care to individuals and families in a congregational setting. Most chaplains then went through processes of endorsement for specialized ministry by their denominations or traditions and some chaplains completed clinical training. In the 1980s, some schools – both Christian and non-Christian - started to develop and revise degree programs to focus on chaplaincy training which today include a number of Buddhist, Muslim, and inter-faith programs. While chaplains historically received a Master of Divinity (MDiv) like many other religious leaders, some institutions now

offer specific MDivs with specializations in chaplaincy or spiritual care, or related Master of Art degrees instead.[15] Cadge and colleagues have found that most theological schools offering degree programs in chaplaincy today have developed independently of one other, have little consensus around the curricular structure of their programs, and have limited conversations among themselves that could begin standardizing chaplaincy training.[16]

Clinical pastoral education (CPE), a form of training now required for many chaplains, emerged in the 1920s and developed alongside theological education and, eventually, chaplaincy-specific degree programs over the course of the twentieth century.[17] Many CPE programs emphasize learning self-awareness and interpersonal skills to provide care across diverse contexts through an action-reflection approach to education.[18] Clevenger and colleagues have investigated whether CPE is currently teaching people the substantive knowledge and skills they need to be competent chaplains, finding that CPE educators have little consensus about what should be taught to chaplains beyond a focus on religious diversity.[19] Chaplaincy researcher Kevin Massey has found that educators are not always teaching students the evidence-based care shown to improve patient outcomes or navigate changing organizations in healthcare settings.[20] In broader studies, many chaplains have mentioned "on-the-job training" and "a good mentor" as key factors to helping them be successful in their first jobs.[21]

Some institutions where chaplains work –especially the military – have also long had their own training programs. Much of this training focuses on sector-specific knowledge like physical fitness, institutional routine, and organizational dynamics. To maintain the institutional separation of church and state enshrined in the First Amendment while still employing chaplains in the military, federal prisons, and the Veterans Administration, chaplains must be endorsed or

certified by their religious organizations (i.e., bodies external to the United States government) as being prepared and able to do the work.[22]

The present-day structure of how many chaplains are trained and certified was shaped largely by the religious demographic contexts in which it was developed – in other words a mostly Christian context now decades in the past. Religious demographics have shifted significantly since then and chaplains trained in mostly Christian-centric contexts do not represent those they serve. Individuals from more diverse and/or minority racial and religious backgrounds including those who identify as "spiritual but not religious" are less common among chaplains than in the general public.

The number of adults who identify as Christian in the United States continues to decline, while those who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular" continues to rise. The latter group grew from 16% of the American public in 2007 to 21% in 2014.[23] Surveys conducted by PPRI reported that 24% of the American public was unaffiliated in 2019.[24] One-third of those under the age of thirty are not religiously affiliated. A majority of adults continue to believe in God, although those who are absolutely certain about that belief declined from 71% in 2007 to 63% in 2014. During this same period, those who experienced a sense of spiritual peace and wellbeing on a weekly basis increased from 52% to 59%, and those who felt a sense of wonder about the universe grew from 39% to 46%. More than half of adults continue to pray daily, and about 40% meditate at least once a week, according to recent surveys.[25] Scholarship suggests that Americans like to "mix and match" their religion, sometimes with multiple or hybrid religious identities.[26]

Congregational attendance, already in decline prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to decrease.[27] A report issued by the "How We Gather" project in 2015

described millennials gathering not in traditional congregations but in groups like athletic and activist organizations with similar goals: to build community, support personal growth, and cultivate a sense of purpose.[28] This de-institutionalization of American religious life, or at least the shift in the kinds of institutions in which people connect around existential questions of meaning and purpose, is taking place in the midst of deep divisions in other aspects of American life and culture. While in previous decades many turned to religious leaders during difficulties and gathered in congregations for mutual support, the de-institutionalization of American religion raises the question of the extent to which this is still the case today.

Chaplains – who today come from all religious backgrounds including none — work in the midst of these demographic changes largely outside of explicitly religious institutions. Chaplains meet people in hospital emergency rooms, hospice care, the military, or with the Red Cross in emergency situations, for example. Many of those they meet are in the midst of crises, transitions, or the death of loved ones. Chaplains – who have diversified demographically without yet representing the racial or religious makeup of those they serve – engage across all axes of difference, which requires specific skills.[29] For example, while there is a quickly growing Latinx demographic in various parts of the U.S., there are relatively few Latinx chaplains.[30] The in-between roles chaplains have historically occupied may become more central as the people in the United States, and especially young people, are less and less religiously affiliated.

Methods

To better understand how chaplains are trained and to map the supply side of chaplaincy and spiritual care, we reviewed existing literature, collected curricular materials and archival documents, and conducted 32 interviews between July 2021 and January 2022 (17 with employers / sector trainers, 13 with endorsers, and 2 with theological educators from evangelical

seminaries).[31] We define employers or "sector trainers" as the major organizations that recruit, hire and employ chaplains, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and Veterans Administration, where chaplains are required by law, as well as hospitals, universities, community organizations, and other settings. We focused primarily on the settings where chaplains are required in selecting employers to interview.

Endorsers are defined as the organizations the federal government recognizes through the Department of Defense as able to endorse or validate individual chaplains in their religious traditions.[32] Endorsing agencies are responsible for ensuring that prospective chaplains are in good standing in the faith community and well equipped to meet the religious needs of those within their care. In selecting endorsers to interview, we favored groups who endorse larger numbers of chaplains than others, have longer histories as endorsers, and/or are innovating in the field.[33]

A prior project gathered data about degree programs in theological schools specifically preparing people to work in chaplaincy or spiritual care. In that project – which included interviews with faculty at 21 theological schools with degree programs for chaplains, as well as 9 clinical educators – the theological schools included identified as more liberal among their faith traditions.[34] The two interviews we conducted for this project, with evangelical seminaries that have degrees specifically focused on chaplaincy and spiritual care, supplement this earlier data.

The demographics of the 32 people interviewed for this working paper are described in Table 2 below. A majority (81%) of respondents identified as Christian. Evangelical Christians accounted for 66% of respondents. The majority of respondents (75%) have a Master's degree or a doctorate; just under 90% are ordained in their faith traditions. Over two-thirds (69%) are men and 59% are white. The average age is 56. While the demographics of those for whom chaplains

provide spiritual care today is increasingly non-white and secular, the majority of those in leadership remain white and Christian. Many of the endorsers in our study, also mostly Christian, have past work experience as military chaplains before becoming endorsers.[35]

We analyzed all of the above data inductively. Interviews, which lasted between 20 and 100 minutes, followed a semi-structured interview guide with separate sets of questions for theological schools, endorsers, and sector trainers. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed in Atlas.ti following the principles of grounded theory research.[36] We developed a set of analytic codes and applied these codes consistently across interviews. All participants in the study provided informed consent and those who are identified gave their permission to be named.

In addition to 32 interviews, we also collected curricular materials and archival documents. We gathered information about the curriculum (including learning outcomes, goals, and required courses for chaplaincy) from all 107 theological schools that offer a total of 122 different programs with chaplaincy or spiritual care in the title at the time of data collection.[37] We also gathered the learning objectives and competencies from the three largest clinical training programs to better understand what chaplains are learning through clinical training. Additionally, interviewees – especially endorsers and those representing employers – provided additional materials that described their learning objectives, requirements, and other relevant training outcomes. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Brandeis University.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Supply Side Interviews, N = 32

Variable	N (%)
Type of Interviewees	
Endorsers	13 (41%)
Sector-Specific Representatives	17 (53%)
Representatives of Theological Schools	2 (6%)
Gender	
Male	22 (69%)
Female	9 (28%)
Other	1 (3%)
Age	
30-40	4 (13%)
41-50	8 (24%)
51-60	10 (31%)
61-70	6 (19%)
over 71	4 (13%)
Race/Ethnicity	
White	19 (59%)
Asian/Asian-American	5 (16%)
Black/African-American	5 (16%)
Other	3 (9%)
Religious Affiliation	
Atheist	1 (3%)
Buddhist	2 (6%)
Catholic	1 (3%)
Evangelical Protestant	21 (66%)
Historically black protestant	3 (9%)
Judaism (Orthodox)	1 (3%)
Mainline Protestant	1 (3%)
Muslim	1 (3%)
Other	1 (3%)
Highest Degree Earned	
PhD	7 (29%)
DMin	4 (13%)
MDiv	7 (22%)
MA	6 (19%)
BA	1 (3%)
Other	7 (22%)
Ordained	
Yes	28 (87%)
No	4 (13%)
Other	
Board Certified	
Yes	10 (31%)
No	22 (69%)

Note: N = 32

Findings and Discussion

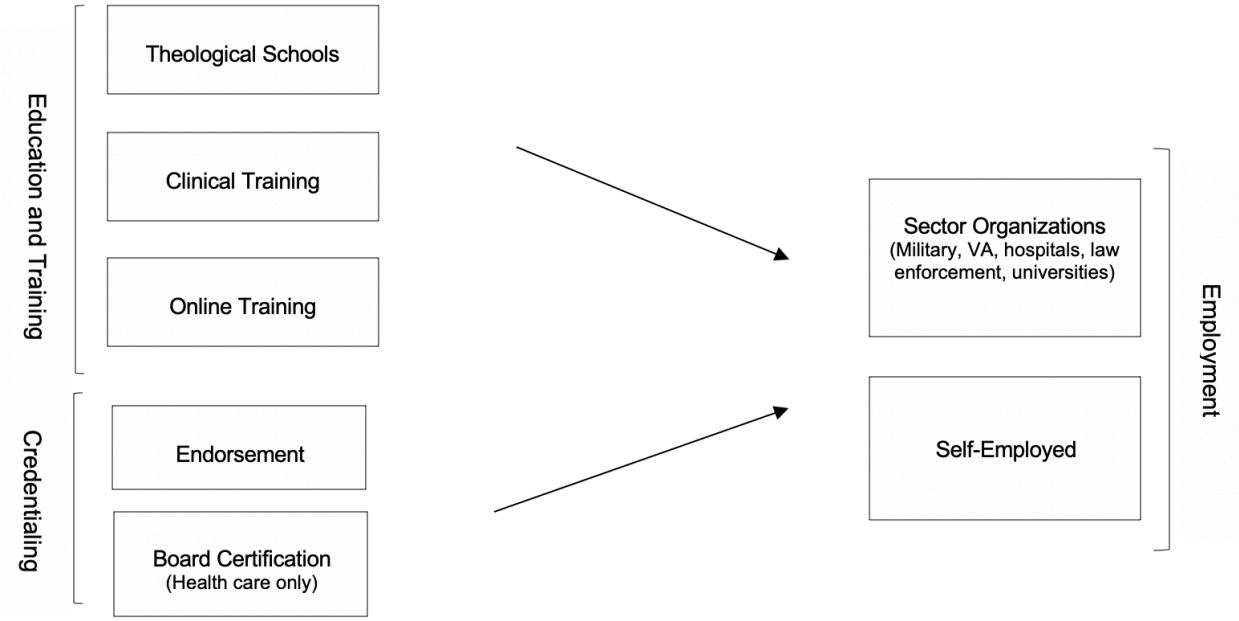
Institutional Map for Training

To become a professional chaplain today, individuals typically need a master's degree in theology or its equivalent and some clinical training and/or endorsement as determined by the setting in which they will work.[38] This requires negotiating multiple institutions – theological schools, clinical training programs, endorsing organizations, sometimes professional organizations, and their actual or potential employers. Many chaplains are also ordained or certified as religious leaders through their religious traditions, which is an additional process. We describe this institutional map in Figure 1.

The institutional map tells a complex story. There are organizations that focus on education and training (theological schools, CPE programs, online training providers), and then credentialing (endorsers, board certification), before employment (e.g., military, hospitals, universities). This is a complicated map for chaplains, both new and old, to make their way through, in part because there are no clear guideposts or delineated paths focused on specific skills (e.g. counseling, responding to crisis, trauma); there is no agreement between those who train and those who employ chaplains over what all chaplains need to know (i.e. competencies); and each setting where chaplains work has its own requirements for credentialing, which makes the process of training and credentialing for chaplain candidates increasingly difficult and ambiguous. For chaplains who want to switch jobs between sectors, the lack of clear training and credentialing standards also makes the process of professional development and career switching difficult. In addition, the majority of the theological training schools and programs are historically Christian, which can structurally exclude other religious groups — like the

nonaffiliated “spiritual but not religious” groups, polytheists and animists, or others — from even considering chaplaincy as a profession.

Figure 1: Supply-Side Institutional Map



Jobs in the military, federal prisons, the VA, and hospitals have more specific requirements for chaplaincy training and credentialing, as outlined in Table 1. For example, the Department of Defense maintains requirements for individuals applying to a military chaplaincy role, which includes a minimum of a 72-hour accredited program, at least two years of service in a local religious body, and endorsement by a federally recognized endorsing body.[39] Chaplain candidates who have had prior experience in the military branch they are applying to also tend to be preferred candidates, in addition to other factors like fitness level and age range. Most chaplain candidates "don't tend to be younger than 30, 31," said Chaplain Fuson, a Navy commander and chaplain educator. Military chaplains at the federal level must be between age 21 and 42, with the Army National Guard and Reserve as exceptions, where chaplains must be under 47. Hospitals often require theological school training, CPE, and board certification. The military does not require CPE, but the Veterans Administration does.

Jobs in law enforcement at the federal, state, and local levels have less stringent requirements overall for their chaplains in comparison to the military. Many of these chaplains are unpaid volunteers. For example, chaplains working for the FBI or the Secret Service are unpaid and are not held to DOD requirements, though often candidates apply to these roles with many years of experience in law enforcement chaplaincy and have theological training and/or experience working with local religious bodies. At the state level, chaplains are often required to go through state-provided training, and law enforcement chaplains working at the federal level go through even more rigorous training with the FBI and Secret Service. Municipal chaplains tend to be local clergy who volunteer outside of their religious bodies.

Independent of the sectors in which a chaplain might operate, there are also trainings offered by independent groups or individuals that are not accredited. With varying degrees of

experience and credentials, this third space of sector training offers online or independent training for chaplains across a wider range of religious traditions and sectors of work. Some examples include corporate chaplaincy and movement chaplaincy. In these cases, the path to employment as a chaplain can be much more entrepreneurial and independent of institutions like the military, federal prisons, hospitals, or universities and often do not require the same level of degree accreditation, ordination, clinical training, or endorsement requirements.

Theological Schools and Clinical Training Programs

Theological schools and clinical training programs, like those accredited by ACPE: the Standard for Spiritual Care and Education, play important roles in training many chaplains. At the time of data collection (between September 2021 and January 2022) we identified 107 theological schools offering a total of 122 degree programs with chaplaincy or spiritual care in the titles. Of those 122 degree programs, 75 are MDiv programs, 24 are MA programs, and the remainder include DMin, PhD, and other programs.

We know from prior studies of theological schools that there is little standardization of chaplain coursework and training.[40] In interviews, theological educators emphasized three primary goals of chaplaincy programs. First, educators want students to be able to work in multi-faith environments. Second, they aim to teach students how to think and reflect theologically and use that perspective to address suffering. Third, they aim to engage students around questions of personal identity and authority. Some faculty members emphasized chaplains' professional identities and the power they have in terms of what other people look to them to do. "Presence," traditionally part of the way chaplains describe their identities and authority, was also mentioned by several theological educators as part of what they are trying to teach.[41] Theological educators

tend to look to clinical training programs as the places students do work around formation, practicing and reflecting on themselves through work with people in difficult situations.

In *A Ministry of Presence*, Sullivan describes "presence" through the work of one law enforcement chaplain who explained that her role was not to keep you from freaking out. "I'm here to be with you while you freak out or grieve or laugh or suffer or sing. It is a ministry of presence. It is showing up with a loving heart." Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite monk in the seventeenth century who wrote *The Practice of the Presence of God*, and John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who was influenced by Brother Lawrence, both form a point of historical reference for presence. The language of presence is also the language that the government and other institutions often use to describe what chaplains do and signals a refusal to proselytize.[42] Rabbi Bryan Kinzbrunner, the president of Neshama, described presence in this way in relation to CPE training: "Presence. Everyone kind of avoids that word…I just mean sometimes people need people… the ideal goal of CPE is to provide a person who identifies as a faith leader…to provide a specialized, deeper level of spiritual care and just, 'Hey I am here for you'" (Rabbi Kinzbrunner, Neshama, 09/30/21).

Table 3. Required Courses Across Degree Programs with Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care in the Title

Course	N (%) all programs	N (%) MDiv	N (%) MA	N (%) DMin	N (%) PhD	N (%) Other Master Deg.*	N (%) Certificate
Requires CPE or clinical training							
Yes	71 (58%)	45 (60%)	16 (67%)	3 (27%)	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	4 (67%)
No	51 (42%)	30 (40%)	8 (33%)	8 (73%)	2 (100%)	1 (25%)	2 (33%)
Requires a pastoral care/counseling course							
Yes	70 (57%)	48 (64%)	14 (58%)	4 (36%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (33%)
No	52 (43%)	27 (36%)	10 (42%)	7 (64%)	2 (100%)	2 (50%)	4 (67%)
Requires an ethics course							
Yes	64 (52%)	42 (56%)	14 (58%)	3 (27%)	1 (50%)	3 (75%)	1 (17%)
No	58 (48%)	33 (44%)	10 (42%)	8 (73%)	1 (50%)	1 (25%)	5 (83%)
Requires language of a sacred text course							
Yes	68 (56%)	52 (69%)	11 (46%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (33%)
No	54 (44%)	23 (31%)	13 (54%)	10 (91%)	2 (100%)	2 (50%)	4 (67%)
Requires a leadership course							
Yes	53 (43%)	35 (47%)	10 (42%)	4 (36%)	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	1 (17%)
No	69 (57%)	40 (53%)	14 (58%)	7 (64%)	2 (100%)	1 (25%)	5 (83%)
Requires a world religions/interfaith course							
Yes	42 (34%)	31 (41%)	7 (29%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	1 (17%)
No	80 (66%)	44 (59%)	17 (71%)	10 (91%)	2 (100%)	2 (50%)	5 (83%)
Requires an introduction to chaplaincy course							
Yes	23 (19%)	14 (19%)	5 (21%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (50%)
No	99 (81%)	61 (81%)	19 (79%)	10 (91%)	2 (100%)	4 (100%)	3 (50%)
Requires a course in death/loss/grief							
Yes	12 (10%)	5 (7%)	3 (13%)	2 (18%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	1 (17%)
No	110 (90%)	70 (93%)	21 (88%)	9 (82%)	2 (100%)	3 (75%)	5 (83%)
Includes optional healthcare chaplaincy course							
Yes	34 (28%)	21 (28%)	10 (42%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	2 (33%)
No	88 (72%)	54 (72%)	14 (58%)	11 (100%)	2 (100%)	3 (75%)	4 (67%)
Includes optional course in military chaplaincy							
Yes	24 (20%)	18 (24%)	4 (17%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)
No	98 (80%)	57 (76%)	20 (83%)	10 (91%)	2 (100%)	4 (100%)	5 (83%)
Total	N=122 (100%)	N=75 (100%)	N=24 (100%)	N=11 (100%)	N=2 (100%)	N=4 (100%)	N=6 (100%)

Table 3 above describes courses common in degree programs in chaplaincy and spiritual care and indicates the extent to which these types of courses are required in Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Arts (MA), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and other programs across the 107 theological schools with chaplaincy or spiritual care degrees. The most to least shared course requirements are as follows:

- CPE or clinical training (required in 58% of all degrees)
- A course in pastoral care / counseling (required in 57% of degree programs)
- Knowledge of the language of a sacred text (required in 56% of MDiv and MA degree programs)
- An ethics course (required in 52% of MDiv and MA degree programs)
- A leadership course (though required in less than half—43%—of degree programs
- A world religions or religious diversity course (required in about a third, 34%)
- An Introduction to Chaplaincy course (required in 19% of degree programs)
- A course in death, grief or less (required in 10%)
- A course in healthcare chaplaincy (an option in 28%)
- A course in military chaplaincy (an option in 20%)

The biggest difference between Master of Arts and Master of Divinity programs is in whether world religions and sacred language text courses are required. World religions courses are required in 49% of MDiv degrees and 29% of Master of Arts degrees. Courses in the language of a sacred text are required in 69% of MDivs and 46% of Master of Arts programs.[43]

As described in Table 4 below, eight groups in the United States offer clinical training. One group, ACPE, is accredited by the U.S Department of Education (DOE), while the rest are not formally accredited by the DOE. Most clinical training includes interacting with individuals

in healthcare or other settings and working with a teacher/supervisor and small group of peers to learn from those interactions.

Table 4. U.S. Clinical Training Programs

Program Name	Web Address
Association for Clinical Pastoral Education* (ACPE)	https://acpe.edu/
CAREForce	https://www.careforce.us/
Center for Spiritual Care & Pastoral Formation	https://www.cscpf.org/
College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy (CPSP)	https://www.cpsp.org/
Healthcare Chaplains Ministry Association	https://www.hcmachaplains.org/
Institute for Clinical Pastoral Training (ICPT)	https://www.icpt.edu/
Clinical Pastoral Care Education International	https://cpe-international.org/
Spiritual Care Association	https://www.spiritualcareassociation.org/

*Note: ACPE is the only association recognized by the US Department of Education as an accreditor of clinical pastoral education. CPSP has an internal accreditation process. ICPT is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET). https://acpe.edu/programs/accreditation

Table 5 below describes the three groups reporting the largest numbers of students under training. ACPE: the Association for Clinical and Pastoral Education is the largest, with 450 centers in the United States. These three groups describe their learning objectives differently. ACPE organizes its curriculum into Level 1 and Level 2 learning outcomes and competencies and focuses learning goals around pastoral formation, pastoral competence, and pastoral reflection. The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) emphasizes clinical, theological, conceptual, and ethical competencies in their trainings for clinical chaplains and/or pastoral counselors. The Institute for Clinical Pastoral Training (ICPT) organizes its curriculum into four main units of clinical learning outcomes, which include integration of evidence-based practices grounded in behavioral science, field experience with patients, and feedback from peers and supervisors. Beyond learning how to care for those going through crisis, trauma, grief, and loss, clinical programs also include a focus on learning to provide care in multi-faith and multicultural settings.

Table 5. Largest Clinical Training Programs Learning Outcomes and Competencies

Program Name	Number of Centers	Learning Outcomes and Competencies
Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)	450	*Level 1 & 2 Outcomes*[16] Pastoral Formation L1: Articulate one's own values and beliefs based on personal identity and history, receive supervision and peer feedback. L2: Articulate an understanding of one's pastoral role congruent with one's cultural, religious values, personhood, and how this impacts those they minister to Pastoral Competence L1: Receive peer and supervisory feedback, recognize relational dynamics, integrate conceptual understandings into pastoral practice, initiate helping relationships across diverse group contexts L2: demonstrate a range of pastoral skills, provide spiritual care to diverse groups and contexts, accounting for individual and system level conditions, perspectives, assessing needs grounded in behavioral science, manage own role with appropriate accountability and self-direction, demonstrate competent use of self in ministry and administrative functions. Pastoral Reflection L1: formulate clear and specific goals for continuing pastoral formation with reference to one's strengths and weaknesses as identified through self-reflection, supervision, and feedback L2: establish collaboration and dialogue with peers, authorities, and other professionals; demonstrate self-supervision through realistic self-evaluation of pastoral functioning; demonstrate awareness of the Common Qualifications and Competencies for Professional Chaplains
College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy (CPSP)	50	*Competencies of Clinical Chaplain/Pastoral Counselor*[17] Clinical Competence Ability to screen, assess, diagnose, and relate effectively to diverse needs of persons/groups experiencing crisis, distress, grief, and loss. Theological Competence Demonstrated ability to reflect deeply on core themes in the theology and ethos of one's own belief system. Conceptual Competence 4 years degree completion, 800-1600 hours of clinical training, development, integration, and articulation of consistent theory and practice of clinical spiritual care, integrating insights from social and behavioral sciences.

[16] ACPE learning outcomes: https://www.manula.com/manuals/acpe/acpe-manuals/2016/en/topic/objectives-and-outcomes-for-level-i-level-ii-cpe

[17] CPSP learning competencies: https://cpsp.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Certification_Manual_031421-FINAL-APPROVED.pdf

		Ethical Competence Ability to articulate and consistently apply in personal and professional functioning
Institute for Clinical Pastoral Training (ICPT)	unknown	*Clinical Learning Outcomes*[18] Unit 1 Clinical Learning Outcomes Students will be able to: access information and resources on a wide range of services, provide information to clients and families about resources for communicating their care preferences, assist with integrating patients' goals, and discussing concerns with clients. Unit 2 Clinical Learning Outcomes Make spiritual care more accessible, utilize common terminology in conversation, advocate for the needs of the community, identify and make available information and resources, provide information to clients about how to best communicate their care preferences, and develop and make available resources for clients to achieve their spiritual goals. Unit 3 Clinical Learning Outcomes Use improvement data, support and advocate for timely and documented spiritual screenings, demonstrate a knowledge of the methods used for spiritual screenings, histories, and assessments, and secure and disseminate information on faith tradition directives. Unit 4 Clinical Learning Outcomes Integrate theories from behavioral sciences into practice, use a thorough knowledge of concepts with clients integrate knowledge of chaplaincy practice into interventions to support the client's values, utilize evidence-based practices in spiritual care, use supportive responses with those experiencing trauma, use evidence-based practices when helping those with fears relating to illnesses, and use culturally appropriate/evidence-based strategies to communicate with those experiencing challenges

[18] ICPT learning outcomes: https://www.icpt.edu/docs/enroll/clinical_training_guide.pdf

In interviews with ACPE Educators in an earlier project, they described their roles helping students learn practical, on-the-ground skills. Just as the theological school programs that prepare people for chaplaincy vary, so do CPE center approaches to training. All programs emphasize developing relational and counseling skills but vary in the emphasis CPE educators placed on didactic instruction or specific bodies of knowledge.[44] Traditionally, CPE has emphasized developing self-awareness and interpersonal skills through an action-reflection approach to education. In interviews with CPE educators, we asked how much they focus on propositional knowledge or didactics in their work with CPE residents in training to become chaplains. Findings from another study indicate substantial variation.[45]

Clinical training through ACPE and other clinical organizations is important for chaplains in some sectors (mostly healthcare) and not required in many others. The military, for example, does not require CPE, as described in Table 1. The Veterans Administration does require CPE, but federal prisons and most colleges and universities do not. We heard much in interviews for this project about the value of CPE as part of the "supply side" of chaplaincy training, though many chaplains simply have not completed it.

Several leaders in the military and law enforcement, where CPE is not required, suggested that such clinical training would be valuable for chaplains. In the words of one, "So much is learned experientially, right? That is why CPE is really valuable. If we could have all of our chaplains go through experiential training where they're hands-on with people and then provide evaluations, that's awesome" (Chaplain & SMSgt McClean, Special Operations Forces, 8/30/21). Mark Arbeen, who was ordained as a deacon by the Catholic Church just shortly after his appointment as Chief of Chaplains for the Secret Service observed, "And in CPE, you get that sense of chaplaincy in a very condensed version and dealing with people who are not of your

faith, and you're told up front, you do not proselytize. You can't. For me, this whole concept is easy. So, I took CPE after serving in the military…But some don't" (Chief Chaplain Arbeen, Secret Service, 09/07/21). Another leader and chaplain educator in the Air Force added that her experience in a CPE residency exposed her to differing faith perspectives outside of her own: "I'll give you an example, in a particular residency for CPE with the military, I was called to see a certain patient who I knew…did not believe that women should be clergy. So having that awareness allowed me to provide for that patient [who did not believe women should be clergy] whereas if I didn't know that…it would've been a very awkward situation" (Chaplain Dixon, Air Force, 10/27/21).

In reflecting on what new chaplains learn from theological and clinical training, employers in this study observed that while students come to them well prepared as spiritual leaders in their own faith traditions, few are well prepared for the level of counseling and crisis intervention that is required in their jobs and how to operate in pluralistic contexts outside of their faith tradition. "A civilian clergy member isn't dealing with crisis, trauma, or a pace of life that is similar to what we're doing in the military" (CDR Fuson, Navy, 10/14/21). A chaplain and associate dean of the Army's chaplaincy school shared,

> But just from my experience, what I would say is two things: Initial entry chaplains that we see are not usually very well formed in being able to provide the kind of counseling that's needed. For instance, when I was a battalion chaplain when I first had come in I didn't expect the amount of counseling that I would do, so that was the main thing that I did. I mean, I easily some weeks would have 30 different counseling sessions a week, and these are heavy hitting like, 'I'm suicidal' or 'My mother just died' or 'We're getting a divorce,' those type of things. So that was the main thing…that I did actually was counseling, not leading worship services or doing other things, just a lot of counseling, and that is actually a skill that the individuals…coming into the military chaplaincy are much less prepared for than, say, being able to preach or something like that (Dr. White, U.S. Army, 07/13/21).

Leaders and educators in the Air Force discussed a common lack of preparation needed for the kind of trauma and moral injury many, including chaplains themselves, face: “So referencing back to, I mentioned mass casualty, there are just not a whole lot of people that are readily equipped to see blood, guts and gore. And once again, I don't mean that irreverently, that is an emotionally traumatic event. Physically, emotionally, psychologically traumatic, spiritually traumatic events, even for the chaplain who's experiencing it. So that is one area in dealing with the wounds of war, or spiritual, moral injury, these are areas that people are not equipped with typically before they come to see us” (Chaplain Richardson, Air Force, 10/27/21). Another leader and educator in law enforcement shared, “I do a lot of training for the FBI at that kind of level. I've been doing a lot of training around things like moral injury because moral injury is not limited to the military. We are seeing it even among our own people. Many FBI agents are former military, so do you see how it just carries over? Even things like moral injury have become a very important training that we're constantly training and reviewing for people, the nuances” (Dr. Palmer, FBI, 10/04/21). SMSgt McClean, the senior enlisted leader of religious affairs in the U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) observed, “Moral injury and suicide prevention are not big things that you focus on in a church setting, right?...These are conversations I didn't have. I had one class on crisis care counseling…that one class gave me some great insights, but a lot of what we do is counseling and intervention. So hermeneutics and theology and Old Testament and New Testament classes, they're great for understanding knowledge and preaching. But as far as the work of chaplaincy, that's one Sunday morning a week, and the rest of it is all people” (08/30/21).

Other employers observed, when sharing their concerns, that more training about how to serve in a pluralistic and religiously diverse context would be helpful, as many chaplains do not

understand other faith perspectives. “I think that most chaplains come in to the military with a specific expertise in their own faith to dynamics, their own faith perspective. And we don't often get an opportunity to engage with other faiths. You get a little bit of it on the seminary side […] But not so much and so you come in sometimes very green to other faith perspectives” (Chaplain Dixon, Air Force, 10/27/21). SMSgt McClean from SOF observed, “I think most of our guys come in as really good pastors…but chaplaincy is something very different. And I don't know if all of our guys are truly prepared for that. Pastoral counseling in a pluralistic setting can look different…What conversation do you have with somebody who's not a member of your faith?” (08/31/21) Chaplain Heidi Kugler, the National Chaplaincy Administrator for the Federal Bureau of Prisons said this: “I think…another good thing that would be helpful to kind of include, a basic for a MDiv degree or an MTS degree, is have a class on comparative religions or have a requirement in that degree program that you have, you learn from a couple other traditions other than your own. So like an introduction to Islam or an introduction to Buddhism or something that kind of expands the scope a little bit” (09/21/21). Dr. White, from the Army’s chaplaincy school also shared, “Then the other thing that I would just say…people entering the military chaplaincy need to be better versed in is just in diversity and operating within a pluralistic context, because part of the way that the whole theological education system is set up right now is…usually you're at an institution in a pipeline that is just with people who are like minded…But there's not the opportunity to even just have discussions with a faith leader from a different tradition and to understand where they're coming from, and even see them as people, not just ideologies” (07/13/21).

Endorsing Chaplains

In addition to theological and clinical programs that train chaplains, endorsing organizations certify and sponsor chaplains to work in various contexts. Endorsement, as defined by various respondents, is "the affirmation" or "seal of approval" given by a denomination or faith tradition that speaks to a chaplain's qualifications and reflects the tradition's confidence that the candidate can represent the tradition in whatever context they serve.[46] Endorsers in our sample described the process of getting endorsement to include: fulfilling education requirements (e.g., MDiv or relevant MA degree); at least two years of work experience in a religious body represented by the endorsing body; and an application process that includes submitting reference letters, essay(s) describing their reasons for becoming a chaplain, a personal interview, and background checks. Endorsement is renewable annually within most traditions. Endorsement is not possible for religious groups who are not recognized by the Department of Defense (DOD) as a federal endorsing agency which limits chaplains to those religious groups officially recognized. Such structural barriers exclude newer religious groups, people identifying as "spiritual but not religious," and others.

Dr. Eric Whitmore, of the Texas Baptists, provided a different understanding of endorsement: "Endorsement is the gate by which a person enters employment, primarily, within the profession of chaplaincy and state, or the guild of chaplain as I call it. And it's one of the check marks, it's one of the things that's going to be required by institutions for employment. But more than that, it provides four aspects of personhood, four aspects of relationships with an individual and their faith group. And that's going to be things like character, accountability, integrity, and responsibility" (09/24/21). For endorsers like Dr. Whitmore, this process provides the employer with quality assurance, in much the same way as certification for individuals and accreditation for institutions functions.

Dr. Paul Anderson, chief U.S. endorser with the Seventh Day Adventists, offered yet another perspective, rooted in his particular tradition: "The gold standard for an Adventist chaplain is someone who has a master in divinity degree from the Seventh Day Adventist Theological Seminary and at least two years of post-MDiv pastoral experience and references…that you can vet and test the competence to preach, teach, Bible studies, lead, counsel, and be an executive advisor…If they're going into healthcare, at least four units of CPE and experience. And the goal is that all of our chaplains should pursue board certification, at some point in their career" (09/16/21). Basharat Saleem, executive director of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), which endorses all Muslim chaplains, explained, "we also require each chaplain applicant to write an essay, a five-to-10-page essay, describing their own personal stories. What motivates them to provide this service? What guides them into this to begin with? What is their personal story? Tell us about your family. Tell us about your community; tell us about your [mosques] or whatever institutions you may be affiliated with. So that we get a better understanding of the whole candidate. And then we also conduct a personal interview, finally" (09/16/21).

Chaplain David Plummer, the executive endorser of the Coalition of Spirit Filled Churches (CSFC), offered his perspective on the meaning and function of endorsement: "[W]hat endorsement means to me is a verification of an individual's qualifications to serve in a particular setting. And those criteria change…military chaplaincy has one set of expectations, healthcare chaplaincy has another set, correction will have another set, that sort of thing. I look at it as the responsibility of the endorser…that when they endorse somebody…not only is this person capable of serving appropriate, competent…ministry to their own faith, but to those people who come from faiths that are very much different than their own, as well as from perspectives of no

faith at all. But to be a caring, helpful presence in the life of folks that they're seeking to serve" (09/03/21).

Endorsers like Chaplain Plummer see themselves having a role related to the faith tradition as well as to the function of the chaplain. Chaplain Plummer also noted that different contexts may require different levels of credentialing as a part of endorsement. He explains, "[D]epending upon the specialization that they're seeking, the answer is, maybe yes, or maybe no. For example…hospice chaplaincy is the wild west of chaplaincy. There are no specific national standards or expectations… they may have no undergraduate work, no graduate work, no clinical training." (09/03/21). Some religious groups also have additional ordination processes, as Bishop Marvin Harada from the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) explained, "In our particular tradition [Shin Buddhism], you have to have…either a master's degree [or a degree] from an institution in Japan that's recognized by our mother church. And then you have to go to Japan for two levels of ordination" (Bishop Marvin Harada, BCA, 10/13/21).

Some endorsers described a multi-faceted role for the endorser, beyond confirming competencies of chaplain applicants. Chaplain Jim Carter, the executive director and endorser for the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC), identifies five categories that he sees as essential to the role of the endorser: credentialing (the formal processes of certification), caring (providing pastoral care to endorsees), covering (providing space for the endorsee to live out their faith authentically within the institutions they are called to serve), catching (which he describes as one way of thinking about recruitment for chaplaincy), and connecting (bringing endorsees together as resources to one another) (09/09/21).

Completing the endorsement process can take several months. Endorsement is required for military chaplains as well as for some chaplains at the federal level (including corrections) and healthcare chaplains depending on their employer and religious tradition. Some chaplains in healthcare also attain board certification, a separate process.[47] For both endorsement and board certification, respondents opined that local religious bodies played an important role in training and assessing professional readiness, as they provided the opportunity for chaplains to build concrete experience in the role of a spiritual caretaker and religious leader. Some interviewees also mentioned that while experience in a local religious body is important, one potential downside is that such a context does not provide the kind of pluralistic environment in which chaplains will need to learn to navigate and serve.

Sector Training for Chaplains

In addition to training received in theological schools, many chaplains also receive training from the organizations where they work. This is especially true in the military, where chaplain recruiter and educator respondents noted that a student could take all the courses offered at their theological school in counseling and still feel underprepared for the level of crisis care and counseling they are immediately thrown into as a chaplain in a military organization.

Each branch of the military has its own chaplaincy school curriculum, learning outcomes, and courses, ranging from foundational courses aimed at new chaplain recruits to advanced level courses that specialize in training and competencies for more senior military chaplains. From its earliest days, the two main purposes of military chaplain training have been to teach new recruits about military life and how to partner with chaplains from other faith groups.[48]

Table 6. Sector Organizations Learning Goals, Objectives, Competencies, Outcomes

Sector Organization	Learning Goals/Competencies/Objectives
Army	3 Main Learning Objectives/Areas across military rank/grades[1] *Spiritual Integration in Practice* – Professional objectives related to religious support (RS) outcomes, specifically how the human factors are integrated and carried out in programs, RS operations, and organizational considerations (pluralism) *RS Professional Development* – Professional objectives focused on self: spiritual formation, and professional development of RS professionals along the Career Map *RS Leadership* – Professional objectives focused around personal leadership and influence capabilities, including communication skills and collaboration that lead to spiritually healthy communities *Grades: LT/CPT, MAJ, LTC, COL (main difference as chaplains move up in grade, they go from more on the ground hands on ministry to supervisory and leadership roles)[2]
Navy	4 Religious Ministry-Aligned Goals[3] *Goal 1: Operationalize religious ministry* – developing an operational mindset to adapt to changing circumstances, approach, and deliver spiritual care regardless of domain assignment *Goal 2: Sharpen core capabilities* – use all four competencies (provide, facilitate, care, advise) to support free exercise of religion in the military. Continuing education, peer and supervisory accountability, and other ways to hone skills are encouraged. *Goal 3: Develop chaplain leaders with intentionality* – Develop leadership skills for increasing complexity in leadership/supervisory roles as chaplains move up in rank in the military structure. *Goal 4: Champion spiritual readiness of sailors and marines* – promote religious freedom and to strengthen spirit of sea service personnel.
Air Force	Foundational Competencies[4] *Developing self* – accountability, resilience, communication, decision-making, initiative, results-focused, self-control, information seeking *Developing others* – leadership, teamwork, perseverance, service mindset, flexibility, precision, develops people *Developing organization* – strategic thinking (planning), change and resource management *Developing ideas* – analytical and creative thinking, fostering innovation, influence
Special Operations	Competencies [5]

[1] Chaplain Professional Objectives: https://usachcs.tradoc.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Professional-Objectives-Final.pdf
[2] Interview with Nathan White (Army)
[3] Dept of the Navy Strategic Plan for Religious Ministry: https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/seniorleadership/chaplain/DoN-Strategic-Plan-for-Religious-Mnistry-v-2-2020-02-07.pdf?ver=2020-02-21-105717-823
[4] US Airforce Foundational Competencies Presentation. See also this article: https://www.jbsa.mil/News/News/Article/2641211/airmans-foundational-competencies-an-air-force-initiative/
[5] This section references a number of non-public documents shared with us.

	Conduct assessments (i.e., spiritual, baseline, and rolling program assessments), design and evaluate programs and services for long-term performance and well-being, articulate efficacy to leaders. Strengthen core spiritual, moral beliefs and values, character ethics Knowledge Spiritual Fitness Scale, 3 subscales (pursuing meaning, purpose, and values; service and sacrifice for the greater good; personal connection with a higher power) Skills Sector Training 3 spheres of practice: identity & acculturation, care for SOF families, interdisciplinary support
Federal Bureau of Prisons	Courses and Training[6] Different Religious Traditions Courses and Accommodations: Nature based religions, Judaic religions, Islamic religions, Eastern religions, Christian religions, Afro-Caribbean religions Knowledge: Understanding different aspects of religions (i.e., diet, history beliefs, belongings. etc.)

*Note: The Veterans Administration was unable to share written materials on training.

[6] This section references a number of non-public documents shared with us.

Table 6 above describes the learning objectives / competencies in trainings required for chaplains in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Special Operations, and Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBP). The FBP trainings are offered as continuing education, while the others are parts of initial and later training in chaplains' careers. In the Army, there are separate groups of competencies depending on military rank focused on three professional learning objectives: spiritual integration in practice; religious support (RS) professional development; and RS leadership. The Navy lists these four major learning goals for chaplains. Chaplains must learn to operationalize religious ministry; sharpen core competencies; develop chaplain leaders with intentionality; and champion the spiritual readiness of sailors and marines. The Air Force focuses its foundational competencies on developing self, developing others, developing organizations, and developing ideas. Special Operations includes select recruits from all three military branches, and also trains chaplains in competencies around how to assess, design, and evaluate programs and services for long term efficacy; a spiritual fitness scale; three main spheres of practice which include identity and acculturation, care for (SOF) special operations forces' families, and interdisciplinary support. The Federal Bureau of Prisons' chaplains primarily provide religious services accommodating for the range of spiritual needs in federal prisons, and so their training offers a range of courses on different religious traditions, including those beyond the larger, historic traditions in the United States. In these courses chaplains cover topics including history, beliefs, material items, and diet.

Synthesizing these learning goals suggests chaplains in the military are trained by the military to perform spiritual care in a way that accounts for the diverse spiritual needs of military members; advance in their own careers through professional development courses, often into more managerial and leadership roles; understand organizational culture and operations to

provide spiritual care effectively; and advise, communicate, and collaborate effectively with military leadership to promote spiritually healthy communities, especially as they move up in rank. "We're not just professionally developing chaplains to do the work of chaplaincy. We're also developing them to do the work of managing other chaplains, and then…strategic thinking, develop programs, and things like that," Dr. White explained (07/13/21). Chaplain Fuson, who teaches at the Navy's chaplaincy school, described the first month as "taking [chaplains] from civilian to naval officer," and the second and third month of training as chaplaincy-specific training: "Provision, facilitation, care, and advisement, and we're going to flesh that out and teach them how to do that in a Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard environment" (10/14/21).

Chaplain Lee, who trained chaplains and trained for the Special Operations Forces, described training this way: "Our main training program is an orientation. We call it religious staff, religious support team orientation course. And so, every chaplain or enlisted religious affairs personnel is expected to go through that their first six months in coming to a SOF assignment. And so, in that course, it's not covering the basics of chaplain support, it's highlighting…what are the cultural differences and organizational differences in being in SOF world that they need to know in order to perform ministry" (08/31/21).

Chaplain Richardson, who teaches in the Air Force, said, "We place value on personal professional integrity, professionalism, differentiated spiritual leadership, pluralism, religious support team formation." (10/27/21). Chaplain Newton, who is the commandant of the Air Force chaplaincy school, said this about Air Force learning competencies: "So once they come to us, we got four primary competencies… And here are the four areas, the primary areas, leadership foundations of the Air Force, chaplain corps, what are our foundational tasks, management concepts of management, and then standards. So underneath each one of those under leadership,

we have spiritual leadership or chaplain core leadership, cross-functional training, and the document you give small descriptions of these things and then leadership from a communication standpoint, how do you communicate as a leader, as a chaplain in your settings, under the foundations for the task that we are responsible for? We have spiritual care engagement with units and counseling/coaching" (10/27/21).

When asked, all of those in leadership in the military agreed that training for chaplains, as conducted by the military, will always be required and necessary mostly due to the need to understand and become part of the organizational structure and culture. Chaplain Lee, from the SOF and Navy, said, "You would always need the sector training or the military specific…And you've not had exposure to the military, that's a real shell shock and you're really having to, kind of reorient your whole world and your way of thinking. So [that kind of training] is pretty critical" (08/31/21). Dr. White said, "So because the sector of military chaplaincy is so specialized, we essentially assume that seminaries and endorsers will ground their individuals who are soon to be chaplains in the specifics of their faith tradition…What we then have to do is then teach them all the military chaplaincy sector-specific things. So we don't assume any of that and we start from ground zero" (07/13/21). Chaplain Richardson, from the Air Force, agreed: "There's certain aspects that just because we are in uniform are always going to be essential [for sector training]. So you just can't get away from those aspects of trade" (10/27/21).

This was also true outside of the military, even though employers like the BOP emphasized religious accommodations training and the Veterans Administration (VA) emphasized clinical pastoral education. Chaplain Kugler said, "It may change what the sectors train on, but there's probably always going to be need to have some sector-specific training. Because it has to do with that environment and that culture of that either agency or institution,

policies or procedures. I think it's probably unrealistic to think that we can get to the point where we have finalized or perfected chaplaincy and practice that everybody can do and just be successful regardless of sector, I don't see that happening. Colleagues of mine that work in the hospitals, they have to be very skilled in understanding just like I do. I need to know the prison policies… They need to know the hospital, they need to know their organizational structure so that they know who to report into at any given time and all that, same thing in the military and VA" (09/21/21). Chaplain Willis, a national program coordinator who trains chaplains at the VA, said, "There are some who do their residency at the VA, and some who don't do pre-work with the VA, but the VA has its own culture…all [new VA chaplains] need to go through the core training. That training provides all of the culture pieces, it introduces chaplains to the type of patient they'll be working with" (01/10/22).

Many of these leaders who train chaplains for various organizations shared that an understanding of their organizational context is crucial to preparing chaplains to work in their contexts. The major chaplain employers expect that theological schools and endorsing bodies will train and vet chaplain candidates in their own religious tradition, as well as prepare chaplains with the theoretical tools needed for their work context. The employing organization would then teach the specifics of that context, but are not the ones to develop the theoretical capability in chaplains.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The supply side or training of chaplains is complex and takes place today across a range of organizations not often working in concert. While education and training come from a multiplicity of sources, the variety and lack of standardization in what is needed to work as a chaplain in different settings sometimes results in cacophony rather than harmony.[49] Individuals,

sometimes with support of programs like the Chaplaincy Candidate Program in the military or mentors, negotiate this confused environment, which requires skill, time, and financial resources, the latter particularly for theological and clinical training. For an increasing number of individuals who identify with other religious groups besides Christianity or as "spiritual but not religious," there are even fewer resources and opportunities.

While people in different parts of this training or supply side ecosystem suggest what may be helpful for their colleagues in other parts of the system to do, the systemic challenge is that this complex process is not operating as a well-coordinated network. Theological educators do not always know what employers are looking for, and the curricula they rely on to train chaplains are not standardized. Clinical educators are not in regular conversation with theological educators, even though they are often teaching the same students. There are no regular conferences or professional meetings where endorsers, employers, and theological and clinical educators are all in sustained conversation about what in current training models is effective and, most importantly, how those models serve chaplains and the people they in turn serve on the ground. While the groups necessarily rely on one another, they do not have robust systems for offering feedback or being in conversation with one another. Our interviews suggest that more focused training in crisis intervention, moral injury, and spiritual care in pluralistic settings, as well as opportunities for feedback and dialogue between supply side institutions, including endorsers, could help to address the gaps employers have observed in the preparation of early-career chaplains.

Mapping and comparing the learning goals in theological schools, clinical training programs, and sector training programs in tables 3, 5 and 6 shows important points of agreement that could be the basis for a tighter, more efficient training network. We see commonalities

across these learning goals in the emphases on self-awareness, counseling skills, leadership, ethics, organizational awareness, and the value and importance of working with diverse others. In a forthcoming volume, a group of theological and clinical educators name some of these as three central competencies – interpersonal, organizational, and meaning-making – that are vital for all chaplains to have.[50] While all chaplains and employers may not agree that these are the three *most* important shared competencies, continuing the conversation about what is central to chaplaincy training and moving towards more standardization is an important step in developing chaplaincy and spiritual care as a field and strengthening the work of chaplains. Part of this conversation should also include sustained attention to sequencing and thinking about the order in which these competencies are introduced and how some, like counseling, can be taught more generally and others, like organizational competencies, are at least partially sector-specific.

Considering shared learning outcomes, however, is only part of the challenge on the supply side. The institutions – theological schools, clinical training programs, employer/sector training, and endorsers – work out of their own histories, sometimes to different ends. Reflecting on the institutions that train chaplains, one employer explained, "It is just very piecemeal and there's no unified effort or understanding across institutions or sectors about how chaplains should be trained…because of that there are gaps and things that are missing in training" (Dr. White, Army, 07/13/21). Dr. White shared that in spite of taking all of the counseling courses offered at his seminary, these still did not prepare him for what he needed on the job. Others asked whether chaplains really need Greek or Hebrew or whether their time in theological school could be focused on counseling or other more job-central skills such using military-approved social media to serve constituents or preparing for a first deployment. Several spoke of expanding education to include more focus on world religions and other axes of difference.

Considering institutional collaborations also includes asking questions about the role of endorsers, important gatekeepers to federal and non-federal chaplaincy positions, as the American public –the people chaplains serve – becomes more secular. All of these questions are complicated by the personal religious and political commitments of individual chaplains, leaders, and employers in our increasingly polarized and contentious American context.

We intended for this working paper to provoke feedback and conversation about the supply side of chaplaincy – both about what seems accurate and flawed in our analyses and ways the groups on the institutional map might better align and collaborate, not for their own interests but to best recruit and serve a new generation of chaplains who reflect changing demographics and needs on the ground. Chaplains need to be trained with an eye towards the demographic and cultural realities in which they will serve in the future. This must include awareness of the decline of mainline Protestant denomination, growth among evangelical Christians and other faith traditions, awareness of large numbers of people who are not – and never were – religiously affiliated, and growing racial diversification. Considerations about supply must also start with questions about demand – how much demand is there for chaplains or for the skills and presence they bring? How many people have contact with a chaplain? Where? Why? What does that contact includes? How do recipients of care experience it? The second working paper in this series will address demand with data from a new Gallup survey and interviews with people about their interactions with chaplains. The final working paper will name and analyze the gap between what we have learned about supply and demand and propose strategic steps forward.

Additional Resources

The Chaplaincy Innovation Lab (CIL) offers resources for those interested in partnering with us to better train and prepare chaplains for the work of tomorrow. This includes supporting the professional development of chaplains to meet urgent and quickly changing needs for diverse spiritual care and changing existing institutional structures so chaplains are trained more consistently and efficiently. Join us:

- Join our mailing list and follow us on social media
- Register for upcoming Lab webinars and watch previous events
- Join a conversation circle or our professional development program
- Read our eBooks, especially for educators - *Educating Effective Chaplains in Theological Schools*, for those who want to consider creating or revising an existing program
- Build relationships and partnerships in your area with leaders, educators, scholars, and practitioners across various sectors, organizations, and institutions as we have identified in this paper. It can be as simple as grabbing lunch or coffee with someone locally outside of your usual sphere, or organizing a group that meets quarterly and in person for dialogue, relationship building, and conversation. We can help introduce you to others in your area.
- Take care of yourself – the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab affirms the importance of self-care and strives to incorporate it into all our offerings.

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PLEASE ALSO CITE OUR 2019 AND 2020 ARTICLES ABOUT DEGREE PROGRAMS FOR CHAPLAINS IN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

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