



United Methodist Endorsing Agency

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry Division of Ordained Ministry

www.gbhem.org/chaplains • umea@gbhem.org • 615-340-7411

Ecclesiastical Approval Process

Ecclesiastical approval is provided for certain civilian/volunteer settings, certification for organizations and for seminary students, who are seeking enrollment in the military chaplain candidate program. An ecclesiastical approval is not an endorsement according to the *2012 Book of Discipline* (§1421.5)

The Chaplain Candidate Program

Each branch of the military services has a program by which qualified seminary students or recent seminary graduates interested in the military chaplaincy may be commissioned and gain training and experience. The program is designed to provide future chaplains for extended active duty and the reserve components. People in this program are commissioned as officers in the reserve. Your request to serve in this program will be considered based on your qualifications and the needs of the specific branch of service.

Approval for the chaplain candidate program does not serve as an endorsement for active duty or reserve component chaplaincy nor does it assume that such endorsement will be guaranteed. Under no circumstances will a chaplain candidate become a chaplain without undergoing the full endorsement process.

Requirements for Chaplain Candidate

1. Must be enrolled full time in an accredited seminary. (Army accepts recent graduates)
2. Must be preparing for ordination as an elder and have completed beginning candidacy *2012 Book of Discipline* (§310, a-e) of the candidacy process for ordination.
3. Must meet the age and physical requirements as specified by the armed forces.

Steps for Chaplain Candidate Program

1. Contact UMEA, umea@gbhem.org, for an application for ecclesiastical approval.
2. For the army or navy, file an application now with the appropriate office of the chief of chaplains. You will be expected to take the military physical examination before completing the process for ecclesiastical approval.
3. The air force requires ecclesiastical approval from UMEA before filing for an application.

The Chaplain Candidate Approval Process

- Complete application form
- Write a brief life sketch (one page)
- Have college and seminary transcripts sent directly to UMEA

UMEA will contact your district superintendent and your local pastor. You will be set up for a personal interview with someone in your area that is an active duty, reserve or retired chaplain. The decision to grant or deny approval is based on all of this information. **The approval process takes approximately 6 to 12 weeks.**

In order to meet basic requirements you must:

- be a citizen of the United States.
- be physically qualified for general service based on an examination by the military.
- meet current requirements determined by the military.

Applicants are responsible for contacting the military branch for which they are seeking approval.

U.S. Army Recruiting Command

Phone: 502-626-0722

www.goarmy.com/chaplain

U.S. Navy Recruiting Command

Phone: 901-874-9216

www.navy.com/officer/clergy

U.S. Air Force Recruiting Service

Phone: 800-803-2452

www.airforce.com/chaplain

Civilian Settings for Ecclesiastical Approval

1. Civil Air Patrol (CAP), www.cap.gov
2. Law Enforcement Chaplains (ICPC), www.icpc4cops.org
3. Fire (FFP) www.firechaplains.org
4. Navy—Volunteer (Coast Guard/Auxiliary), www.uscg.mil
5. Specialized—(Disaster services, EMS)

All candidates seeking approval for the above settings must request and complete an application. UMEA will contact one personal reference and the district superintendent provided by the applicant.

For further information contact:

The United Methodist Endorsing Agency

Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007

Phone: 615-340-7411, Fax: 615-340-7358,

E-mail: umea@gbhem.org Web site: www.gbhem.org/chaplains

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