



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 *2016 Book of Discipline* (§1421.5)

Ecclesiastical Approval / Volunteer Chaplaincy

Settings:

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)
6. Volunteer State Guard (varies by state)
7. Other unpaid volunteer chaplain programs (hospitals, prisons, etc.)

Requirements for Volunteer Chaplaincy Approval

1. Be a clergy member of an annual conference in one of the following categories: associate member, commissioned/ordained as provisional or full deacon or elder, licensed local pastor, or full member of an annual conference. (may also be retired clergy)
2. Additional requirements are specified by setting, such as belonging to a professional association like ICPC or the FFP.

Please call the endorsing agency if you have questions about requirements or volunteer chaplaincy.

Application and Approval Process for Volunteer Chaplaincy

Start the application process online at <https://methodist.smapply.io/>

Register for an account and complete the application for endorsement. There is an application fee to be paid by credit card during stage two of the application process.

You will be asked to provide and/or upload:

- Complete the application form with basic information about you, your clergy status, your education and background
- A recent photograph

- References – You will only need a reference from you district superintendent for your application and will be asked to provide contact information for him/her. The online system will send the reference request via email and you will be able to see when or if he/she has responded.

Once your DS has responded and uploaded the reference you will be notified, and UMEA will issue necessary forms and letters for your organization.

The Military Chaplain Candidate Program

Each branch of the military services has a program by which qualified seminary students or recent seminary graduates interested in 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 Program

3. Must be enrolled full time in an accredited seminary. (Army accepts recent graduates)
4. Must be preparing for ordination as an elder and have completed beginning candidacy *2016 Book of Discipline* (§310, a-e) of the candidacy process for ordination.
5. Must meet the age and physical requirements as specified by the armed forces.

Application and Approval Process for Chaplain Candidate Program

Start the application process online at <https://methodist.smapply.io/>

Register for an account and complete the application for endorsement. There is an application fee to be paid by credit card during stage two of the application process.

You will be asked to provide and/or upload:

- Complete the application form with basic information about you, your candidacy status, your education and background
- A recent photograph
- a brief life sketch (one page)
- Have college and seminary transcripts sent directly to UMEA
- A Bearing and Use of Arms Statement
- References – You will need two references for your application and will be asked to provide contact information for them. The online system will send all requests for references via email and you will be able to see when or if they have responded. The four requested references shall be from: 1.) your district superintendent 2.) your pastor.

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. The air force requires ecclesiastical approval from UMEA before filing for an application.

Once all your materials have been received and uploaded, including your DS reference, you will be notified and 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 the information provided by you and your references during the process. **The approval process takes approximately 6 to 12 weeks.**

In order to meet basic armed forces 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

For further information contact:

The United Methodist Endorsing Agency

Division of Ordained Ministry

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

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Web site: [www.gbhem.org/chaplains 4/2013](http://www.gbhem.org/chaplains%204/2013)

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