



United Methodist Endorsing Agency

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry Division of Ordained Ministry

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

Extension Ministry Endorsement Process

All people have the right to receive the full ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church is aware of its responsibility to provide adequate professional ministry to those in particular situations beyond the local church. These call for an ecumenical ministry to persons of different denominations and faith groups. In order to assure high standards of competence and keep faith with ecumenical agreements concerning uniform standards for ministry in specialized settings, the United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA) shall have Disciplinary mandated functions for appointments in extension ministries that require endorsement.

The United Methodist Church operates as a connectional system. The General Conference determines which parts of that system have responsibility for various functions through the *Book of Discipline*. Individuals are accountable to the annual conference. Standards and criteria for ordination, certification, and endorsement are established by the whole church. Individuals who provide ministries of pastoral care in specialized settings such as the military, pastoral counseling, the workplace, health care, or prisons and jails are accountable to the annual conference and to UMEA.

Endorsement is the process established by the church to ensure that people providing ministry in these settings are capable and appropriate representatives of the denomination. Endorsement provides an additional means of relationship between those people in extension ministry and the whole ministry of the church.

Who Needs Endorsement?

The *Book of Discipline* states UMEA has certain responsibilities for people appointed to ministries of pastoral care in specialized settings—including but not limited to ministry in the military, correctional institutions, the Department of Veterans Health Administration, health-care settings, pastoral counseling, marriage and family counseling, workplace ministries, community service ministries, and other related ministry settings that conference Boards of Ordained Ministry and bishops may designate. Clergy to be appointed to any of the above appointments by their bishop shall need ecclesiastical endorsement. Governmental agencies, corporations, professional certifying organizations and other secular institutions are not qualified to judge the religious qualifications of those they employ as chaplains or spiritual care providers. Instead, they look to church bodies and other religious institutions to endorse those qualified and authorized to provide religious ministry in those settings. Clergy appointed to extension ministries beyond the local church must often provide evidence of ecclesiastical endorsement to the institutions which train and employ them.

What is Ecclesiastical Endorsement?

Ecclesiastical endorsement is an affirmation that a person is, or will be, performing a valid extension ministry consistent with the covenantal community of The United Methodist Church and has presented evidence of having the special education, experience, and skills necessary to perform that ministry. Endorsement is given to a specific setting. Should an individual move from one setting to another, the endorsement will be reviewed and, if approved, issued for the new setting. UMEA serves as a bridge between the annual conference and institutions which employ United Methodist clergy.

Endorsement is to a specific setting. If you no longer serve in that setting, the endorsement is withdrawn. Contact UMEA if you change settings since a new endorsement may be required. Approval is not automatic and may be conditional. Your endorsement is only active while you are employed or seeking employment in your setting. **Endorsement may also be withdrawn** for cause, in accordance with the policies and procedures set by UMEA per the Book of Discipline.

Requirements for Ecclesiastical Endorsement

People seeking endorsement to a specific setting must meet the following criteria:

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
2. Additional requirements are specified by setting. Different settings require different categories of ministry. UMEA only endorses elders, for example, for service with the military services due to the need for enduring, worldwide sacramental authority. Please call the endorsing agency if you have questions about which clergy categories might serve in which settings.
3. Willingness to pursue training and maintain board certification appropriate for the setting.
4. Completion of the application and interview process with UMEA. Resulting in approval by the Endorsing Committee.

The Endorsement Process

Apply Online

<https://methodist.smapply.io>

Register for an account and complete the application for endorsement. There is a \$50 application fee to be paid by credit card during stage two of the application process.

You will need to provide:

- Basic information about you, your clergy status, your education and background
- A recent photograph
- A short life history describing how God brought you to this point in your ministry
- A brief description of your understanding of ministry in the requested setting as a representative of the United Methodist Church
- A brief description of your plan to remain connected to the United Methodist Church and fulfill your vows as a member of the church and the clergy
- References – You will need four 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 bishop – your application cannot be processed further without the bishop’s approval and willingness to appoint you to the setting applied for 2.) your district superintendent – also a must for application advancement. 3&4.) two personal references

- Military applicants may be required to upload additional documents as well as a Bearing and Use of Arms statement.

When all your materials have been received – including reference reports - UMEA will notify you and schedule an interview with you in Nashville, TN. UMEA will pay for travel to and from Nashville, lodging, and meals at facility. The interview committee meets three times per year. From starting your application to endorsement, the process normally takes a minimum of two to four months. Please call UMEA with any questions regarding the requirements or application process.

The Interview

A central interviewing committee is made up of endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors. Whenever possible, at least one member of the committee will represent the setting for which you seek endorsement. The purpose of this interview is to understand your perception of Christian faith as it relates to the setting in which you desire to minister.

Areas examined will include:

- **Moral and emotional stability** (ability to effectively face crisis and adversity)
- **Self-evaluation** (ability to objectively evaluate present ministry)
- **Theory of Christian ministry** (ability to express clearly)
- **Motivation** (exhibits desire for endorsement in chaplaincy or pastoral counseling)
- **Continuing education** (willingness to obtain education, experience, and certification as they apply)
- **Sense of humor** (ability to laugh at themselves and others appropriately)
- **Cooperativeness/diversity** (ability and willingness to work effectively in diverse settings)
- **Balance** (ability to keep family and work in balance)
- **Institutional vs. congregational ministry** (understands the difference, especially how institutions may affect their ministry)
- **Pastor** (has someone who provides personal pastoral care)
- **Resilience** (self-care and the existence of a personal supportive network)

One member of the committee will serve as presenter for you and will be especially familiar with your materials. You will be notified of the recommendation at the time of your interview. Following the interview, the committee will make a recommendation to the Endorsing Committee.

The Endorsing Committee

The Endorsing Committee has the authority to grant or deny ecclesiastical endorsement. It is composed of elected members of the DOM and chaired by a bishop. The committee meets three times a year and has responsibility for policy and process regarding endorsement.

Once you are endorsed, a copy of your endorsement will be sent to your bishop and your district superintendent. You will receive a copy for your files.

Provisional endorsement may be granted if you successfully complete the endorsing process but lack the required professional certification or are a provisional member of the annual conference. Such endorsement will include specific requirements to be fulfilled before full endorsement can be issued. Provisional endorsement is valid for one year. Extensions may be granted annually when requested.

Appealing a denial of endorsement. If you disagree with the decision of the Endorsing Committee, you may appeal to that committee either in person or in writing within 90 days of notification of the committee decision. You must, however, pay your own expenses for a personal appearance.

Endorsement for Deacons

There are four components to service as a chaplain or pastoral counselor: appointment, endorsement, certification, and employment. A deacon may be appointed to serve as a chaplain or pastoral counselor, if the request for appointment is approved by the bishop, endorsement is granted, the deacon is working toward certification and an employer is willing to hire. Deacons do not have sacramental authority unless granted by their bishop. (§328) Deacons are eligible for endorsement to non-military settings by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency and must meet the same requirements as elders: full/provisional conference membership, training, experience, and certification as appropriate.

Endorsement to military settings and the Federal Bureau of Prisons is limited to elders due to the requirement for sacramental authority in those settings.

Civilian Chaplaincy

Endorsement for self-employed settings will require the establishment of an oversight board with ecclesiastical, professional, financial and legal expertise represented on the board. Contact the endorsing agency for more information.

Civilian Settings

1. Children's Home
2. Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor
3. General Hospital
4. Hospice
5. Life Coach
6. Marriage and Family Therapy
7. Mental Health
8. Pastoral Counseling
9. Police
10. Prison/Correctional Institution
11. Retirement Community
12. Specialized
13. Substance Abuse
14. Veterans Health Administration
15. Workplace

Professional Association and Board Certification

Where board certification is required, endorsements are considered provisional until you achieve certification. You will be required to report your progress toward certification annually.

Endorsement for self-employed settings will require the establishment of an oversight board with ecclesiastical, professional, financial and legal expertise represented on the board. Contact the endorsing agency for more information.

Standards for endorsement include relationship with and/or certification by the appropriate national professional pastoral care organization. Those recognized include:

- American Association for Marriage and Therapy (AAMFT) www.aamft.org
- American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) www.aapc.org
- American on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) www.aaidd.org
- American Correctional Chaplains Association (ACCA) www.correctionalchaplains.org
- Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) www.acpe.edu

- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) www.professionalchaplains.org
- College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) www.pastoralreport.com
- Federation of Fire Chaplains (FFC) www.firechaplains.org
- International Coach Federation (ICF) <http://coachfederation.org/>
- International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) www.icpc4cops.org
- National Institute of Business and Industrial Chaplaincy (NIBIC) www.nibic.com
- National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC) www.navac.net

Contact information is available on the UMEA website, www.gbhem.org/chaplains

In situations not covered by recognized certifying agencies, UMEA will set minimum standards which may include specialized training for the type of ministry for which endorsement is sought and may include at least one year of supervised clinical training or comparable professional experience.

For Federal Bureau of Prisons and Veterans Health Administration position and applications go to www.usajobs.gov.

Military Chaplaincy

Army	*Active *Reserve *National Guard
Navy	*Active *Reserve
Air Force	*Active *Reserve *Air National Guard

In order to meet basic requirements for initial appointment (active duty or reserve) you must:

- Be a citizen of the United States
- Be physically qualified for general service based on an examination by the military
- Meet current requirement determined by the military

Applicants are responsible for contacting the military branch for which they are seeking endorsement and speaking directly to a chaplain recruiter before applying for endorsement.

- **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**

Active Duty

Phone: 800-803-2452

www.airforce.com/chaplain

Reserves

Phone: 478-327-2268

www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/Chaplain/

Air Guard

Phone: 866-839-7438

www.goang.com/Chaplain

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
 E-mail: umea@gbhem.org
 Website: www.gbhem.org/chaplains
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/umc.umea/>
 Apply Online: <https://methodist.smapply.io>