



United Methodist Endorsing Agency

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry | Division of Ordained Ministry

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Endorsement Guide

... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.
Genesis 12:3

What Is Endorsement?

Ecclesiastical endorsement affirms that a clergyperson is qualified and authorized to perform the full range of ministry required in the military, correctional institutions, health-care settings, retirement communities, children's homes, counseling centers, workplace ministries, and other specialized ministries of pastoral care. The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* identifies the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as the body authorized to provide endorsement on behalf of the United Methodist Church.

Endorsement and the Connection

The United Methodist Church is a connectional system. The General Conference sets standards for licensing and ordination through the Book of Discipline. Annual conferences apply those standards as they call, assess, and set apart United Methodists to serve as clergy for the church. As a part of that process, the annual conference verifies the educational, moral, legal, financial, and psychological readiness of candidates, in addition to assessing their gifts and calling for ordained or licensed ministry. UMEA does not repeat these tasks during endorsement. UMEA, rather, assesses applicants for endorsement on their readiness for service in the requested setting as representatives of the church.

Bishops appoint endorsed elders and local pastors under the provisions of paragraph 344.1.b of the Book of Discipline. Endorsed deacons are appointed under paragraph 331.4.b. Endorsement is not granted without the approval of the applicant's bishop.

Endorsed clergy remain connected and accountable to both their annual conferences and UMEA throughout their ministries, living out the covenants of their baptism and ordination in specialized settings. They are also responsible to their employers and to the professional associations which certify them. Think of endorsed ministry, then, as a four-way partnership that includes the clergyperson, the church, the employer, and the specialized profession to which the endorsed person is called.

What Do I need to Know about Endorsement?

Endorsement Policy is governed by the 2020 version of the *Endorsement Policy Handbook* approved by the GBHEM Board of Directors. Please consult the handbook for more information and authoritative guidance.

Endorsement alone is not usually sufficient to gain employment. Many employers require Clinical Pastoral Education or other professional training, state licensing or board certification. Endorsed clergy are responsible for their own employment, and for coordinating their appointments with their annual conferences.

Endorsement is granted for a specific setting. Should you wish to change settings, we will review your request. Approval is not automatic and may be conditional. Your endorsement is only active while you are employed or seeking employment in your approved setting.

Endorsement may also be withdrawn for cause, in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Board of Directors elected by General Conference. Every endorsed chaplain is expected to comply with the accepted standards of ethical ministry and practice in their fields of service.

Civilian Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care

Clergy may be endorsed for settings that include:

- Healthcare Chaplain (Hospital, Hospice, Residential Health Care, Veterans Health)
- Prison Chaplain
- Law Enforcement, Fire or Emergency Services Chaplain
- Workplace Chaplain
- Retirement Community Chaplain
- Children's Home Chaplain
- Therapeutic Counselor (Pastoral Counselor, Mental Health Therapist, Marriage and Family Therapist, Substance Abuse Counselor)
- Clinical Pastoral Education Certified Educator
- Life Coach or Spiritual Director
- Other Specialized Ministries of Professional Pastoral Care

Different settings require different forms of preparation, credentialing, and certification. Please call the endorsing agency if you have questions about a what a setting requires.

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.

Preparing for Specialized Ministries

Ministry in every specialized setting requires professional preparation beyond that minimums expected of all clergy by the *Book of Discipline*. Clergy develop the competencies required for specialized ministries through a combination of employer-provided training, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), academic coursework, professional seminars, self-study, and other means. Employers determine which means of preparation and certification are acceptable for those they employ. Professional associations establish ethical guidelines, competency standards and training requirements for those they certify.

All endorsees are expected throughout their ministries to:

- Be proactive in seeking the specialized knowledge and competencies that will best serve their constituents, meet their employers' expectations, and provide for their own long-term professional development.
- Participate in professional associations, communities of interest or similar groups for the sake of camaraderie, mutual encouragement, shared learning and to support the overall growth of the specialized profession.

UMEA has long recognized the following organizations as providers of appropriate training, certification, and professional association in their respective fields. UMEA habitually recommends them to applicants and endorsees.

- American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)
- American Correctional Chaplains Association (ACCA)
- Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)
- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
- College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP)
- Federation of Fire Chaplains (FFC)
- Fellowship of United Methodist Spiritual Directors and Retreat Leaders (FUMSDRL)
- International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains (IACAC)
- International Coaching Federation (ICF)
- International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC)
- Military Chaplains Association (MCA)
- National Association of Veteran Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC)
- National Institute of Business and Industrial Chaplaincy (NIBIC)
- Spiritual Directors International (SDI)
- Transitional Intentional Interim Ministers Association (TIIMSA)
- United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries (UMA)

Military Chaplaincy

To meet basic requirements for initial appointment (active duty or reserve) you must:

- Meet height, weight, and age requirements.
- Be a citizen or a legal permanent resident of the United States and be eligible for a security clearance.
- Be physically qualified for military service based on an examination by the military medical system.
- Meet other requirements, as determined by the military departments.

To learn more about military chaplaincy, always speak directly to a chaplain recruiter. Only chaplain recruiters have the expertise to guide you correctly.

The United Methodist Endorsing Agency is a member of the **National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF)**.

Requirements for Endorsement

1. Clergy member of an annual conference of the United Methodist Church in one of the following categories: full or provisional elder; full or provisional deacon; associate member or licensed local pastor.
 - Endorsement for service with the military is limited to elders.
2. Approval by your bishop to serve in the requested setting.
 - Licensed local pastors and provisional members will require the approval of their bishops for endorsement to settings that will take them out of their own annual conferences.
 - Deacons requiring sacramental authority for their requested settings must secure it from their bishops prior to endorsement.
3. Professional training and certification as appropriate for the setting.
4. Completion of an application and interview with UMEA.
5. Approval by the endorsing committee.

Applying for Endorsement

Apply online at <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. You will need to provide:

- Basic information about yourself, your clergy status, your education, and your background
- A recent photograph
- A short life history describing how God brought you to this calling in your ministry
- A brief description of your understanding of ministry in the requested setting
- Two personal references and their contact information
- Contact information for your bishop and district superintendent

When all your materials have been received – including reference reports – UMEA will schedule an interview with you. We are currently conducting interviews remotely by means of the Zoom conferencing app. Applications must be fully complete – including references received – before we can schedule your interview.

The Interview

Your interview panel will consist of a panel of two or three experienced chaplains or pastoral counselors. Whenever possible, at least one member of the committee will represent the setting for which you seek endorsement. You will be notified of the recommendation at the time of your interview. Areas to be examined during your interview include:

- Spiritual maturity, moral and emotional stability
- Self-awareness
- Motivation for endorsement
- Understanding of ministry and competencies required in the endorsed setting
- Understanding of the nature of the institution you wish to serve
- Ability to work cooperatively in pluralistic settings and teams
- Ability to maintain your United Methodist identity and connection
- Willingness to obtain education, experience, and certification as they apply
- Sense of humor
- Ability to keep life, work, and family in balance
- Resilience, self-care, and the existence of a personal supportive network

Following the interview, the application moves to the Endorsing Committee of GBHEM's Board of Directors for a final decision.

The United Methodist Endorsing Agency

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