



United Methodist Endorsing Agency

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry Division of Ordained Ministry

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Information for Employers of Endorsed United Methodist Chaplains

Endorsement

Endorsement is the process established by the church to ensure that clergy possess the skills, personal qualities and authorities required to serve as representatives of the denomination in specialized ministries outside the local church. Both employers and professional certifying bodies look to religious certifying bodies for this endorsement because:

- It assures the institution that the clergyperson is good standing with the church, appointable by the bishop and authorized to perform the full range of ministry required in the endorsed setting on the church's behalf
- It attests to the endorsee's personal suitability for ministry in the endorsed setting
- It offers the denomination's ongoing support for those ministering beyond the church walls, and holds them accountable for their conduct
- It affirms that the church expects the clergyperson to accommodate the religious rights of everyone within the institution or organization's scope of care

Demonstrated Evidence

All UMC endorsees:

- Completed the academic preparation required of all United Methodist clergy
- Received a psychological assessment, underwent background checks and demonstrated competence in the knowledge, skills and abilities required of all United Methodist clergy as part of the multi-year ordination or licensing process within their annual conferences
- Received positive recommendations from their bishops, supervisors and peers
- Provided evidence of the training (academic and clinical) and expertise required for professional ministry within the specialized setting
- Provided written documentation describing their call, preparation and understanding of ministry in the specialized setting
- Established or agreed to attain credentials with a certifying body recognized in the profession
- Received a positive recommendation from an expert interview panel following an in-depth, in-person conversation and a thorough review of the application materials
- Received an affirmative vote from the endorsing committee

Expectations

United Methodist clergy are members of a connectional system, annually appointed by their respective Bishop to whatever church or ministry they serve. Because of this relationship, they are always under supervision and accountability to the church. The United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA) serves as the point of contact for clergy serving in ministries where “endorsement” is required.

The church’s endorsing agency came into existence in response to pressing U.S. needs for spiritual care and religious accommodation of military service personnel during World War II. After the war, other government agencies (e.g., Veterans, Prisons, and Mental Health) expanded the employment of endorsed clergy to meet the spiritual needs of their specialized populations. A key outgrowth of these ministries has been a professionalization of spiritual care, most readily evident through diverse chaplaincy and pastoral counseling vocations. With professionalization came the development of standards, ethics, and certification within the profession.

The United Methodist Church takes the endorsement process very seriously because each endorsed clergy person is a representative of the denomination. As such, the established standards to receive endorsement are amongst the highest of any religious organization granting endorsement.

Responsibilities

UMEA: Once endorsed, UMEA continues its relationship with the endorsee through ongoing nurture, support, advocacy and denominational connectedness. This includes:

- The provision of onsite visits; cluster gatherings, continuing education opportunities sponsored in connection with UMC associated colleges, universities and seminaries
- The provision of pastoral care in response to specific identified need

Endorsed Clergy: UMC clergy are always under Episcopal appointment, and therefore, each clergy member must maintain one’s connection to the church. By UMC polity they are required to:

- Attend their annual conference
- Submit an annual report describing their ministry with a copy of their annual evaluation
- Be faithful to one’s ordination vows and maintain their essential covenant with the UMC

Employer: If there is a need for an employer to dialogue with the church about a specific issue or concern related to a UMC endorsed employee, the employer should initiate the dialogue with UMEA’s Director of Endorsement.

Endorsed UMC clergy are highly trained professionals accountable to both the employer and church. They are an outstanding resource for employers able to respond to challenging populations. The UMC hopes that employers recognize, appreciate and support our endorsed clergy serving in their organization.

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