

Chaplain Qualifications - Frequently Asked Questions

What are the ecclesiastical requirements for a chaplain?

Applicants must obtain an official ecclesiastical endorsement from their denomination or faith group. This endorsement should certify that the applicant is an ordained spiritual leader, qualified spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally to serve in a correctional environment, and sensitive to religious diversity.

What if my denomination does not ordain clergy?

Members of ecclesiastically recognized institutes of vowed men or women are eligible for the chaplaincy. For those religious communities or traditions who do not ordain, adequate documentation of the applicant recognized religious and ministerial leadership roles are required.

What are the education requirements?

Applicant must possess a baccalaureate degree of not less than 120 semester hours from an accredited college or university. Additionally, the applicant must possess 80 semester hours of graduate credit in theological or religious studies from an accredited residential school to include an earned graduate degree.

Do I need Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)?

No. At least two years or 4,174 hours, of pastoral/spiritual leadership experience in a congregational or specialized ministerial setting within the endorsing body after formal ministerial preparation is required. Clinical Pastoral Education may satisfy up to one year, or 2,087 hours, of the pastoral/spiritual experience.

Is there an age requirement?

The applicant must be between 21 and 37 years old for an initial appointment. The Department of Justice may grant an age waiver under certain circumstances.

Is there a residency requirement?

For three of the five years immediately prior to applying for a position, the applicant must have resided in the United States, worked for the United States overseas in a Federal or military capacity, or be a dependent of a Federal or military employee serving overseas.