



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

CHANGE NOTICE

OPI RSD/CSB
NUMBER 3939.08, CN-2
DATE February 24, 2025

Chaplains' Employment, Responsibilities, and Endorsements

/s/

Approved: William W. Lothrop
Acting Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons

This Change Notice (CN) implements the following changes to Program Statement 3939.08, CN-1, **Chaplains' Employment, Responsibilities, and Endorsements**, dated February 14, 2023, to remove references to any concept that may conflict with the January 20, 2025, Executive Order *Ending Radical and Wasteful Governmental DEI Programs and Preferencing*. The deletions are marked with a ~~striketrough~~.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

a. Program Objectives.

- The hiring procedures for chaplains will be centralized and standardized.
- The endorsement process for chaplains will ensure professional and ecclesiastical integrity of those called to serve as pastors to inmates.
- The Bureau's ministry will be enhanced and made more effective by support from religious bodies which represent the ~~diverse~~ religious needs of the inmate population.
- Ecclesiastical and ministerial duties and work schedules of chaplains will be delineated.

2. HIRING CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHAPLAINS

- a. **Hiring Flexibilities.** The agency will utilize the full scope of chaplaincy hiring flexibilities to best meet ~~diverse~~ religious hiring needs and hard-to-fill Chaplaincy needs.



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CHANGE NOTICE

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Chaplains' Employment, Responsibilities, and Endorsements

/s/

Approved: Colette S. Peters

Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons

This Change Notice (CN) implements the following changes to Program Statement 3939.08, **Chaplains' Employment, Responsibilities, and Endorsements**, dated October 24, 2022.

The deleted text is struck through.

2. HIRING CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHAPLAINS

Chaplains are Excepted Service governmental employees. Chaplains are employed to ensure the free exercise of religion for inmates, lead worship and religious studies out of their own faith tradition, facilitate religious accommodations across faith lines, offer pastoral care, and provide faith-based reentry programming.

a. **Hiring Flexibilities.** The agency will utilize the full scope of chaplaincy hiring flexibilities to best meet ~~diverse~~ religious hiring needs and hard-to-fill Chaplaincy needs.

b. **Chaplaincy Application and Selection:** The Chaplaincy Services Branch (CSB) will work with the Human Resources Management Division (HRMD) on posting of Chaplaincy vacancy announcements and processing applicants following Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Excepted Service guidelines and branch procedures.

The Chaplaincy Administrator and/or their designee will review each institutional (Standard Form 52) Request for Personnel Action before an agency Chaplaincy announcement is posted and make recommendations on how the announcement should be issued to best meet specific institutional and religious needs. This includes status employees in competitive

positions seeking appointments as Chaplains. ~~The selecting official for Chaplaincy positions will be the Assistant Director of the Reentry Services Division.~~



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Federal Bureau of Prisons

PROGRAM STATEMENT

OPI: RSD/CSB

NUMBER: 3939.08

DATE: October 24, 2022

Chaplains' Employment, Responsibilities, and Endorsements

/s/

Approved: Colette S. Peters

Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To establish standards and procedures by which Chaplains are hired and maintain their employment with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Bureau). This Program Statement also:

- Outlines hiring considerations for Chaplains.
- Describes the personal and professional ministry qualifications for Chaplains.
- Describes procedures for maintaining and changing religious endorsement.
- Defines the promoting procedures for Chaplains.
- Determines the unique duties and work schedules for Chaplains.
- Details the training requirements for Chaplains.

a. Summary of Changes

Policy Rescinded

P3939.07 CN-1 *Chaplains' Employment, Responsibilities, and Endorsements (2/9/2022)*

Clarified and updated chaplaincy processes and training opportunities.

b. Program Objectives.

- The hiring procedures for chaplains will be centralized and standardized.
- The endorsement process for chaplains will ensure professional and ecclesiastical integrity of those called to serve as pastors to inmates.

- The Bureau's ministry will be enhanced and made more effective by support from religious bodies which represent the diverse religious needs of the inmate population.
- Ecclesiastical and ministerial duties and work schedules of chaplains will be delineated.

c. **Institution Supplement.** None required. Should local facilities make any changes outside changes required in national policy or establish any additional local procedures to implement national policy, the local Union may invoke to negotiate procedures or appropriate arrangements.

2. HIRING CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHAPLAINS

Chaplains are Excepted Service governmental employees. Chaplains are employed to ensure the free exercise of religion for inmates, lead worship and religious studies out of their own faith tradition, facilitate religious accommodations across faith lines, offer pastoral care, and provide faith-based reentry programming.

c. **Hiring Flexibilities.** The agency will utilize the full scope of chaplaincy hiring flexibilities to best meet diverse religious hiring needs and hard-to-fill Chaplaincy needs.

d. **Chaplaincy Application and Selection:** The Chaplaincy Services Branch (CSB) will work with the Human Resources Management Division (HRMD) on posting of Chaplaincy vacancy announcements and processing applicants following Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Excepted Service guidelines and branch procedures.

The Chaplaincy Administrator and/or their designee will review each institutional (Standard Form 52) Request for Personnel Action before an agency Chaplaincy announcement is posted and make recommendations on how the announcement should be issued to best meet specific institutional and religious needs. This includes status employees in competitive positions seeking appointments as Chaplains. ~~The selecting official for Chaplaincy positions will be the Assistant Director of the Reentry Services Division.~~

3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR STAFF CHAPLAINS

a. Personal Qualifications

Personal qualifications are outlined for all agency staff in the Program Statements **Pre-employment, BOP Identifications and Background Investigation**, and **Employee Development Manual**. Following initial hire into a law enforcement position, Chaplains, as all staff, must pass Introduction to Correctional Techniques (ICT) Phase II requirements.

See the Program Statement **Physical and Medical Standards for Newly Hired Correctional Employees.**

The four specific requirements for Bureau Chaplaincy are education, professional ministry experience, religious credentialing, and endorsement.

b. Academic Requirements

(1) **Bachelor's Degree.** An applicant must possess an earned baccalaureate degree with no less than 120 semester hours from a qualifying educational institution.

(2) **Graduate Theological Degree.** An applicant must also possess the degree of Master of Divinity or equivalent theological educational qualifications. Equivalent educational qualifications means a conferred degree comprised of no less than 72 semester hours of graduate coursework including:

- 20 semester hours in pastoral ministry.
- 20 semester hours in any combination of theology, ethics, and philosophy of religion.
- 20 semester hours in the study of sacred writings, including the study of languages in which sacred writings are/were written.
- 12 semester hours in religious history and/or world religions.

(3) **Qualified Institution.** To meet Federal requirements, education must be from colleges, universities, or theological institutions that are accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. If a degree is from a non-U.S. institution, the applicant must provide a report from a credential evaluation service, which specializes in interpretation of non-U.S. educational credits, verifying the degree's equivalency.

(4) **Formal Supervised Ministry Training.** If the Master's degree program does not indicate formal supervised ministry experience, applicants must have documentation of completing formal training in supervised ministry (e.g. Clinical Pastoral Education [CPE], field theological education program, or professional ministry internship, etc.).

c. Professional Ministry Experience. Applicants must have at least 4,160 hours of pastoral/spiritual leadership experience. This is equivalent to two years of full-time formal religious leadership experience compatible with the duties of a religious ministry provider in the applicant's religious organization and relevant to professional chaplaincy. This experience must be gained while in a relationship with the endorsing religious organization. Four units of CPE may satisfy up to one year of the requirement of pastoral and spiritual leadership experience.

d. Religious Endorsement. Chaplains must be endorsed by their own religious endorsing body before being employed by the Bureau and maintain their endorsement as a condition for agency employment. Ordinarily, a person, or group of persons, appointed to carry out this function, gives this endorsement. Some religious traditions, however, have no clearly designated national endorsing person or body. In such cases, the Chaplaincy Administrator, in consultation with the Chaplaincy Services Coordinators (CSCs), will determine the appropriateness of a chaplaincy candidate's endorsement. Verification of religious endorsement must be provided by submission of a completed (BP-A0679) Religious Endorsement for Chaplaincy form.

For endorsing organizations seeking approval with the Bureau, an (BP-A1120) Ecclesiastical Endorsing Organization Request to Designate Ecclesiastical Endorsing Official form must be submitted for approval prior to endorsing a candidate. The religious endorser would ordinarily be an official agent of a religious organization that functions primarily to perform religious ministries to a non-military and non-prison lay constituency and have a non-profit status. The endorsing agent must have authority from the religious organization to provide and withdraw religious endorsement for chaplaincy work within the Bureau. The applicant must have at least a two-year relationship with the endorsing religious organization. The CSB maintains a listing of recognized religious endorsing organizations.

e. Religious Credentials. Applicants will be ordained clergy or members of ecclesiastically recognized religious institutes of vowed men or women. In lieu of professional ordination credentials, adequate documentation of the applicant's recognized religious and ministerial roles in their respective faith communities is required.

f. Religious Faculties: Religious faculties are the jurisdictional authority, privilege, or permission to perform religious or sacramental rights. If religious faculties are required for the ministry's function, the Chaplain must have received them from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction where the institution is located before a reporting date is established.

4. CHAPLAIN TRAINEE POSITIONS

The Bureau has established GS-11 Chaplain Trainee entry-level chaplaincy positions. These positions exist for those who have either lack local professional ministry experience or a graduate theological educational degree to qualify at the Staff Chaplain level. Additional information about how institutions may pursue Chaplain Trainees is available on the Central Office Chaplaincy Services Branch intranet page. After completing one full-year with the agency, with at least a Fully Successful/Achieved Results evaluation, and upon completing the academic requirements satisfactorily, the Chaplain Trainee is eligible for a subsequent appointment at the GS-0060-12 level.

5. MAINTAINING RELIGIOUS ENDORSEMENT

Endorsement must be maintained throughout each Chaplain's tenure. Each Chaplain is required to complete the (BP-A1119) Chaplain Endorsement Verification form on a biannual basis.

a. **Attendance at Annual Conference or Spiritual Retreat.** Chaplains must foster their ecclesiastical relationships with their endorsing bodies. Chaplains are authorized administrative leave by the local Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to attend an annual conference or spiritual retreat conducted by or under the auspices of the endorsing body. Each Chaplain should schedule (in consultation with their supervisor), as far in advance as possible to ensure appropriate program coverage, attendance at an annual conference or spiritual retreat not exceeding five consecutive working days.

Attendance at an annual conference or spiritual retreat is considered official government travel. Chaplains may submit local requests for funding. The Chaplain will ensure a travel authorization is pre-approved in accordance with Bureau travel procedures with supporting documentation. Such requests will be within the United States and U.S. Territories, unless otherwise approved by the National Chaplaincy Administrator.

b. **Changes in Endorsement.** The Chaplain and endorsing body must notify the Chaplaincy Administrator whenever there is a change in endorsement to ensure the Chaplain's continued endorsement. Upon completion of the change of endorsement, the Chaplain will submit a new (BP-A0679) Religious Endorsement for Chaplaincy form to the Chaplaincy Administrator.

The CSB maintains a listing of recognized ecclesiastical endorsing bodies and affirms the Chaplains' relationships with their respective endorsing body. The Chaplaincy Administrator or designee communicates with the endorsers.

6. DUTIES AND WORK SCHEDULES OF CHAPLAINS

In order to meet the religious accommodations of inmates, Chaplains work evenings and weekends. Ordinarily, Chaplains are required to work two evenings. However, Chaplains will not be expected to routinely work more than three evenings per week. Ordinarily, evening hour programs will start at 6 pm and will be extended until the institution's final recall of inmates.

In accordance with religious obligations associated with Chaplains' endorsement, Chaplains lead religious worship services regularly, facilitate seasonal holy days within their faith tradition, and are encouraged to offer faith-specific studies.

Chaplains share pastoral duties, supervision of inmate groups, and administrative functions equitably. Chaplaincy departments meet regularly for planning and team building. Additionally, the department will conduct an annual staff retreat.

When staff members are needed to cover emergency posts, chaplains will be assigned posts consistent with their pastoral roles. Chaplains ordinarily should not be assigned to mass shakedowns, searching inmates, or the more visible custody posts as they maintain high visibility throughout the institution and provide needed crisis intervention and pastoral care.

7. TRAINING FOR CHAPLAINS

- Chaplains will adhere to the most current version of the Bureau's Mandatory Training Standards.
- Chaplains will have the option to complete firearms training; however, once participation is waived, the individual cannot participate in local annual refresher firearms training.
- Chaplains may submit additional continuing education training requests to CSB.

REFERENCES

Program Statements

- P3300.03 Employment (5/8/2017)
P3330.02 Pre-employment (7/25/2016)
P3732.01 BOP Identifications and Background Investigation (5/22/2018)
P3906.22 ^{CN-1} Employee Development Manual (2/9/2022)
P3906.24 Physical and Medical Standards for Newly Hired Correctional Employees
 (2/24/2017)

Other References

Title 5 CFR Part 302 Employment in the Excepted Service (This authority is derived from 5 U.S.C. §§ 1302, 3301, 3302, and 8151)

ACA Standards

Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th Edition: 5-ACI-1D-14, 5-ACI-7F-01, 5-ACI-7F-02, 5-ACI-7F-03, 5-ACI-7F-04

Performance-Based Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities, 4th Edition: 4-ALDF-5C-18, 4-ALDF-5C-19, 4-ALDF-5C-20, 4-ALDF-6D-01

Standards for Administration of Correctional Agencies, 2nd Edition: 2-CO-5E-01

Standards for Correctional Training Agencies: None

Records Retention

Requirements and retention guidance for records and information applicable to this program are available in the Records and Information Disposition Schedule (RIDS) on Sallyport.