

DETAILED CHECKLIST FOR CHAPLAIN CANDIDATES

Grace to you and peace.

For those considering a call as a military chaplain, here is a document that represents a current picture of the steps to successfully prepare.

Service requirements periodically change, but the basic requirements and fundamentals have remained constant for the last 30 years.

We trust God for favor, and we do our part by meeting our administrative requirements for selection. Also, we trust Him to put us through the experiences and trials to shape our ministry and character so that we produce good fruit in the place He has called us.

Chaplain Requirements (Army, Navy, and Air Force Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard)
Ordained minister. For GCI, you must be ordained by an mPACT Church or one recognized by mPACT.

Be endorsed by GCI.

Have completed 120 semester hour undergraduate degree from an accredited institution.

Have completed at least a 72-hour Master of divinity degree from an accredited institution. A full 90-hour MDiv is not required but makes you more competitive.

Be a US citizen.

Pass the National Agency Check for a security clearance.

Pass Armed Forces physical exam.

Be willing to provide or coordinate programs for individuals of all faiths.

Have two years' pastoral ministry with experience, normally post-seminary, in conducting baptisms, communion services, weddings, funerals, and grief counseling (Active Duty).

Have experience or currently be engaged in pastoral ministry (Reserves and National Guard).

Meet age requirements for specific branch

When you believe God is calling you to be an Army chaplain, contact the following four people/agencies:

Your pastor.

A chaplain recruiter.

The GCI/mPACT chaplain endorser.

(If you do not yet have an MDiv degree) Manna University or another Bible-believing institution.

1. Your pastor: Meet with your pastor and tell him about your call to the chaplaincy. Tell him you want to work toward ordination and a staff position at your church.

When you eventually apply for active duty chaplaincy, the standard is two years on church staff post-seminary.

The following made candidates more competitive:

- Served in a paid ministry position.
- Higher number of hours per week: e.g. “has served 25+ hours per week for the last 4 years.”
- Higher level of responsibility: e.g. “supervised 2 paid staff and 15 volunteers for a 90-member kids’ program.”
- Larger number of duties performed: e.g. “in the past 2 years 2LT Smith has preached 11 times, conducted 2 funerals and 2 weddings, and conducted 24 counseling sessions.”

As you work toward meeting the requirements for becoming a chaplain, build your resume. Keep a journal of what you have done, dates, names, and contacts.

- What positions have you held? Kids’ pastor, youth pastor, associate pastor... how many hours per week? Number of paid employees and volunteers you led and supervised?
- What duties have you performed? Weddings, funerals, led communion, baptisms, preached, etc. Keep a log of the duties you perform and put it into your resume.
- What part of your experience is post-seminary? The standard is 2 years post-seminary, but that may be waived if you have a lot of experience before and during seminary.

2. The Chaplain Recruiter: Chaplain recruiters can be found at:

- Army: <https://www.goarmy.com/chaplain/become-an-army-chaplain.html>
- Navy: <https://www.navy.com/careers/navy-chaplain>
- Air Force: <https://www.airforce.com/careers/specialty-careers/chaplain>
- Army National Guard: <https://www.nationalguard.com/chaplain>
- Air National Guard: <https://www.goang.com/careers/business-operations-and-administration/chaplain.html%20.html>

The chaplain recruiter will do the following:

- Send you an application to apply to be a chaplain candidate. To be a chaplain candidate you must already have your bachelor’s degree, be enrolled full time in an MDiv Program, and be active in ministry. Ordination is not required to be a candidate.
- The Army chaplain recruiter will assign you to a reserve or National Guard unit where you will serve under a supervisory chaplain while you complete your MDiv and work toward ordination. The Army typically accepts 60 candidates per year. Once you are in the unit, your supervisory chaplain will coach you in ministry, and will help you get a slot for the Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course and for paid 6-week practicums on active duty. The Army process includes an interview with a senior chaplain.
- The Navy recruiter will assign you to the CCPO program manager, who will assign you to the Chaplain Officer Development School one summer and to a two-week practicum the next summer. The Navy accepts about 25 candidates per year beginning 1 October. The Navy process includes an interview with a senior chaplain.
- The Air Force will assign you to the Office of the Chaplain Candidate Manager at Air Force Reserve Command, <https://www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/Chaplain/Chaplain-Candidate/>. That

office will schedule you for the Basic Course (60 Days) and a summer practicum (35 days) while you are in seminary.

If you are already ordained and have your MDiv, you go through a similar process, but you can go directly to the accessions board and to Chaplain Officer Basic as a chaplain, then straight to an active duty, reserve, or National Guard assignment.

3. The GCI/mPACT Churches Endorser: Go the “Apply for GCI Endorsement” page of this website and fill out an application online. This will go to our endorser team.

In addition to the DOD requirements listed above, we require the following for chaplains:

Be a man who demonstrates a call to ministry through a track record of proven character and ministry impact.

Establish and maintain an accountability relationship with an mPact church that addresses one’s personal and family life as well as conduct of ministry.

Complete an interview in person or through visual electronic media with the GCI endorser. If married, your wife must be part of the interview.

Be ready to pass the applicable service’s physical fitness test by a comfortable margin.

Have two years of ministry experience preaching, baptizing, conducting funerals and weddings, counseling, and the other practical skills required of a minister. Back this up with a solid resume that includes positions, hours per week, levels of responsibility, and pastoral duties performed.

For candidates, we require that you:

Be actively serving at an mPACT church or a church approved by the endorser.

Be a man of Christian character.

Be ready to pass the applicable service’s physical fitness test.

4. Manna U. or Comparable MDiv Program. Enroll full-time in an accredited MDiv program.

- Chaplains MUST have a 72-hour MDiv. The 90-hour MDiv is not required but makes you more competitive.
- Higher seminary GPA = more competitive.
- You may count CHBOLC as seminary credit as independent study as long as your seminary approves. Regent MDiv program gave me 5 credit hours for CHBOLC.
- The 6-week chaplain candidate internship can count as a 3-hour capstone/internship.

Additionally, here are some areas we will want to discuss with you:

Describe your salvation experience, call to ministry, and how your ministry experience has shaped your identity and call as a chaplain.

What is your military experience? Being prior service helps significantly by reducing your learning curve when you join the military. Even being in ROTC sets you ahead of candidates who come straight in.

If you have good efficiency reports include them in the packet you send to the recruiter.

Motivation for ministry in the chaplaincy and your family's understanding of this commitment. Was there an event in your life or did people around you realize you had a gift for ministry in this area? Is your wife on board? Does she understand that your duties include deploying into harm's way? Is she ready for frequent separations and moving the family every 2 years?

Willingness to work cooperatively with chaplains of various faith groups, ethnic backgrounds, and genders. Are you willing to serve alongside those you disagree with theologically? You will have Roman Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Pagan soldiers in your unit. Have you thought through how you will support their free exercise rights without compromising your own theological convictions?

Ability to work with people. What jobs have you worked in, what sports teams have you been on, what situations have you been part of where you had to lead and foster cooperation? It may be a ministry setting or not.

Are you in shape? The military is a physical business and you will connect with your soldiers / sailors / marines / airmen on foot marches, on runs, and in the gym.

Are you a good preacher? Are you working to refine and build your preaching ability? The military needs chaplains who are good communicators so put your best foot forward and represent GCI faithfully - be Biblical, doctrinally sound, and led by the Spirit.

Have you scrubbed your social media accounts? You have the freedom to preach the full counsel of God as a chaplain (and we expect you to do so), but beware of putting anything on social media that could hurt your chances at an accession board.

Keep a binder with copies of everything that went into / will go into your application packet.

- Ordination Certificate
- GCI Endorsement
- Undergrad and MDiv Transcripts
- Resume of all jobs held and all ministry positions. For ministry positions state hours per week, responsibilities, whether you supervised others, etc. Include what duties you performed: counseling, preaching, funerals, weddings, etc.
- DD 214 if prior service
- Documentation of awards, deployments, qualifications.
- Selected efficiency reports.
- "Why I want to be a chaplain" essay.

Stay in touch with us – we are in your corner to help solve any issues you encounter, and to pray for your ministry success!