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# Program Statement

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**OPI:** CPD  
**NUMBER:** 3939.07  
**DATE:** 10/26/2001  
**SUBJECT:** Chaplains' Employment,  
Responsibilities, and  
Endorsements

1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE.** To establish standards and procedures by which applicants for the Chaplain and Chaplain Trainee positions are hired.

This Program Statement also:

- ◆ Describes the procedures for maintaining ecclesiastical endorsement and changing religious affiliation and subsequent ecclesiastical endorsement.
- ◆ Defines the process for filling vacancies by reassigning and promoting staff chaplains.
- ◆ Determines the unique duties and work schedules of chaplains derived from ministerial functions in a correctional setting.
- ◆ Describes the training requirements for chaplains.

Due to the variety of academic requirements for ordaining religious leaders in the community and the professional nature of Bureau chaplaincy positions, minimum personal, academic, and experience standards are required.

In addition, staff chaplains must be endorsed by their own religious traditions before being employed by the Bureau. Ordinarily, this endorsement is given by a person, or group of persons, appointed to carry out this function.

- ◆ Some religious traditions, however, have no clearly designated national endorsing person or body. Then, the Chaplaincy Administrator, in consultation with the Regional Chaplaincy Administrators, will determine the appropriateness of the chaplaincy candidate's endorsement.

In requiring endorsement of its chaplaincy candidates, the Bureau ensures the professional ecclesiastical integrity of those called to serve as pastors to staff and inmates. The Bureau seeks to maintain a cooperative relationship with a wide variety of religious groups in the community.

Active support from legitimate religious bodies, representative of the inmate population's diverse needs, helps to ensure the effective ministry of Bureau chaplains.

All chaplain positions in the Bureau of Prisons are excepted service positions. Since competitive appointment procedures do not govern excepted status employees, reassignment and promotion procedures for chaplains are defined.

**2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES.** This revision includes the following changes and modifications:

- ◆ The Directives Referenced have been updated to include Title 5 CFR Part 302, "Employment in the Excepted Service," which derives its authority from 5 U.S.C. §§ 1302, 3301, 3302 and 8151.
- ◆ The hiring procedures for initial appointments to chaplaincy are described and include personal, academic, and professional qualifications and the duties of the Central Office and Regional Chaplaincy Administrators in the application process.
- ◆ An alternative to firearms training at Glynco is provided, since chaplains will no longer participate in firearms training at both Glynco and institutions.
- ◆ The move from competitive service to excepted service is a voluntary process which requires staff acknowledgment and signature.
- ◆ The process for changing religious affiliation and subsequent ecclesiastical endorsement is delineated.
- ◆ The reassignment procedures for current Bureau chaplains (GS-060-12) are described.
- ◆ The procedures for promotion to supervisory chaplain (GS-060-13) are described.
- ◆ The required work schedules of staff chaplains are explained including working two evenings per week as well as on the weekly day of religious observance.

- ◆ A list of the required training for chaplains is provided.
- ◆ New forms for use in employing, training, reassigning, and promoting are available as BP-Forms.

3. **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES.** The expected results of this program are:

a. The hiring procedures for chaplains will be centralized and standardized; the reassignment and promotion procedures for chaplains will be clearly defined and standardized.

b. The endorsement process for chaplains will ensure professional and ecclesiastical integrity of those called to serve as pastors to inmates.

c. 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.

d. Ecclesiastical and ministerial duties and work schedules of chaplains will be delineated.

#### 4. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED**

##### a. **Directive Rescinded**

PS 3939.06 Professional Endorsements of BOP Chaplains  
(8/25/97)

##### b. **Directives Referenced**

PS 3000.02 Human Resource Management Manual (5/17/99)  
PS 3906.16 Employee Development Manual (3/21/97)

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

#### 5. **STANDARDS REFERENCED**

a. American Correctional Association 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions: 3-4454

b. American Correctional Association 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities: 3-ALDF-5F-01

c. American Correctional Association Standards for Adult Correctional Boot Camp Programs: 1-ABC-5F-01

6. **PRETRIAL, HOLDOVER, AND/OR DETAINEE PROCEDURES.** Procedures in this Program Statement apply to staffing in pretrial, holdover and/or detainee institutions.

7. **HIRING PROCEDURES FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENTS TO CHAPLAINCY.** The following requirements and procedures are used for hiring chaplain applicants:

a. **Personal Qualifications**

(1) **Age.** Ordinarily, an initial appointment must be made prior to one's 37th birthday. The Department of Justice has granted an age requirement exemption for candidates of some faith traditions because there is a documented shortage of qualified candidates for those faith traditions who meet the maximum age entry provision of Title 5 U.S.C. § 3307 and Public Law 100-238. For further information pertaining to these exemptions, contact the Central Office Chaplaincy Services Branch.

(2) **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 applicants' recognized religious and ministerial roles in their respective faith communities is required.

(3) **Suitability.** Applicants must conform to the suitability guidelines established for areas such as:

- ◆ employment,
- ◆ financial and criminal history,
- ◆ intentional false statements or misrepresentation in the application, or
- ◆ moral turpitude.

(4) **Physical Standards.** Applicants must pass a pre-employment physical examination which includes a urinalysis.

- ◆ Following initial hire, as a condition of future employment, applicants must further pass a Physical Abilities Test (PAT). This is designed to measure the physical requirements necessary to

perform essential functions in a correctional setting, such as the ability to respond to emergencies.

(5) **Firearms Training.** Chaplains are exempt from the requirement and will not participate in firearms training during the Introductory Correctional Training at Glynco.

- ◆ In lieu of firearms training, applicants will complete the cross development series on chaplaincy or an equivalent study course.

In addition, chaplains will not participate in the annual firearms qualification at the institution.

b. **Professional Preparation**

(1) **Academic Requirements.** Candidates must possess an earned bachelor's degree and a Master of Divinity degree, consisting of 90 hours of graduate study from an Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accredited residential seminary or school of theology, or have earned the equivalent educational credits described below.

- ◆ The academic institutions must send official transcripts directly to the Chaplaincy Services Branch, Central Office.

Equivalent educational credits required:

- (a) An earned bachelor's degree from an accredited college with at least 120 semester hours (180 quarter hours).
- (b) Successful completion of 90 semester hours or 120 quarter hours of graduate study which included or was supplemented by:
  - ◆ 20 semester hours (27 quarter hours) of pastoral ministry (examples: homiletics, preaching, ministry, pastoral counseling, supervised ministry).
  - ◆ 20 semester hours (27 quarter hours) in any combination of theology, ethics, and philosophy of religion.
  - ◆ 20 semester hours (27 quarter hours) in religious history or world religions (The applicant will be able to demonstrate an understanding of religious pluralism).

- ◆ 20 semester hours (27 quarter hours) in the study of sacred writings, including the study of languages in which sacred religious writings are written.

(2) **Experience.** At least two years, or 4,174 hours, of pastoral/spiritual leadership experience in a congregational or specialized ministry setting within the endorsing body after formal ministerial preparation. Clinical Pastoral Education, a valuable training experience for chaplains, may satisfy up to one year, or 2,087 hours, of the requirement of pastoral/spiritual experience.

(3) **Ecclesiastical Endorsement.** An Ecclesiastical Endorsement attests to:

- ◆ the applicant's suitability for correctional ministry,
- ◆ support for his or her candidacy,
- ◆ a clear assurance statement that the applicant has no present nor past legal or moral barrier to congregational ministry, and
- ◆ an affirmation that the applicant will facilitate inmates of all faiths opportunities to pursue individual religious beliefs and practices.

The applicant's relationship to the endorsing body must reflect a minimum two-year association before endorsement.

**c. Completed Application**

(1) The applicant mails the completed application to the Central Office Chaplaincy Services Branch. As soon as all requested documentation is received, the applicant will be notified that the application packet is complete.

(2) The names of candidates will be kept on a wait list. When a vacancy occurs, applications of suitable candidates will be forwarded to the Regional Chaplaincy Administrator.

**d. Interview and Selection Process.** The following procedures apply to all applicants not presently occupying a Bureau chaplain position. This includes status employees in competitive positions seeking appointments as chaplains.

(1) The Regional Chaplaincy Administrator notifies the Chaplaincy Administrator of an institution vacancy which may be filled with a candidate.

(2) The Chaplaincy Services Branch forwards the files of eligible candidates to the Regional Office where the NCIC/credit checks, PAT video, writing sample, pre-employment integrity and panel interviews ordinarily take place. A Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions form (SF-85P) is mailed to each applicant to be interviewed. The applicants must bring the completed form to the scheduled interview.

The selection process and the selecting official will adhere to all legal requirements regarding priority considerations and veteran's preference.

(3) The Regional Human Resource Office forwards the tentative selectee's application packet to the institution for review and recommendation.

(4) The institution's Human Resource Office is to complete the law enforcement and reference checks. When the initial results are received, the application will be forwarded to the Warden for review and employment recommendation.

(5) Once a tentative selection is made, the institution's Human Resource office is to prepare a "Conditional Offer of Employment Letter" for the Regional Director's signature. The employment folder is forwarded to the Regional Office.

(6) The Regional Director reviews and signs the "Conditional Offer of Employment" letter and returns the employment folder to the institution.

(7) The institution's Human Resource Office sends the conditional offer of employment letter to the selected candidate and schedules an appointment for a physical and urinalysis. Upon satisfactory completion, a Request for Personnel Action form (SF-52) is prepared for the Regional Director's signature. The employment folder is forwarded to the Regional Office.

(8) The Regional Director signs the SF-52 and the candidate's employment folder is returned to the institution.

(9) The institution's Human Resource Office initiates the background investigation and establishes a reporting date with the candidate.

(10) When required, the chaplain candidate will secure ministerial faculties or credentials from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction where the institution is located before a reporting

date is determined. The candidate will forward the documentation of the ministerial faculties to the institution for placement in the employment folder.

(11) Non-selected candidates are informed by letter from the institution's Human Resource Office. Their employment folders are returned to the Central Office Chaplaincy Branch.

- ◆ The employment folders of non-selected candidates expire after one year from last consideration given.

(12) The trial period for newly appointed chaplains is one year.

## 9. CHAPLAIN TRAINEE POSITIONS

a. The Bureau of Prisons has established Chaplain Trainee positions (GS 060-9/11) in correctional institutions nationwide.

- ◆ The applicants must meet all of the personal and professional qualifications, except academic. The applicants must, however, normally be within 18-24 months of completing the academic requirements for a staff chaplain position and will receive on-the-job training while completing their Master of Divinity or equivalent degrees.

b. A standard application packet will be sent to the applicant upon receiving a written request. In addition, the applicant must complete the following form:

- ◆ A Chaplain Trainee Certification and Authorization with Standard Mobility Statement form (BP-S682).

c. When the Chaplain Trainee is within 20 hours of completing the degree, the Chaplain Trainee becomes eligible for promotion to a GS-060-11. Because this is a new appointment, there is no requirement of one year at the previous grade level.

- ◆ Upon completing the academic training satisfactorily, the Chaplain Trainee is eligible for a subsequent appointment at the GS-060-12 level.

d. If the academic requirements are not met within the stipulated time frame, the Chaplain Trainee may be terminated from the program.

- ◆ If the Chaplain Trainee is a status employee and does not complete the academic requirements within the stipulated time frame, the employee will be returned to a position commensurate with the position held before starting the Chaplain Trainee program.
- ◆ The agency will consider the employee's location preference in making the reassignment.

e. The Chaplain Trainee's failure to make continuous educational progress will result in removal from the Chaplain Trainee Program.

10. **MAINTAINING ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT.** Endorsement must be maintained throughout each Chaplain's tenure.

a. **Attendance at Annual Conference or Spiritual Retreat.** The following procedures, with appropriate documentation, will be followed:

(1) The Bureau recommends that Chaplains foster their ecclesiastical relationships and endorsements annually. The process for facilitating an ecclesiastical relationship is normally done through attendance at an annual conference or spiritual retreat conducted by or under the auspices of the endorsing body.

(2) Each staff Chaplain should schedule, as far in advance as possible, attendance at an annual conference or spiritual retreat not exceeding five consecutive working days.

- ◆ The scheduling is to be done in consultation with co-workers/supervisor to ensure appropriate program coverage.

(3) Chaplains are authorized administrative leave to attend this annual function, since it is normally required to maintain endorsement for employment.

- ◆ A travel authorization is to be submitted for the approving authority's signature.
- ◆ No appropriated funds will be allocated for this function.

(4) Sites for administrative leave must be within the United States and U.S. Territories, unless otherwise approved by the Chaplaincy Administrator.

**b. Changes in Religious Affiliation and Subsequent Endorsing Agents/Bodies**

(1) Ordinarily, Chaplains who are changing religious affiliation must provide written notification to the Chaplaincy Administrator when the transition process is initiated.

- ◆ The Chaplain changing religious affiliation must ensure that both endorsing bodies are fully aware of this change in relationship.

(2) Because endorsement is a condition of employment, the Chaplaincy Administrator requires written documentation from the respective ecclesiastical endorsing bodies acknowledging their awareness of the endorsement relationship's transition.

(3) Once the change in religious affiliation is complete, a new Ecclesiastical Endorsement form must be forwarded to the Central Office Chaplaincy Branch. The Chaplaincy Branch, in turn, will forward the new form to the institution where it will become part of the Chaplain's Official Personnel File.

**c. The Bureau has affirmed and will maintain a relationship with the endorsing agents (bodies) of all chaplains.**

(1) The chaplains' endorsing agents are encouraged to correspond and/or visit with them at the institutions.

(2) The Bureau will assert its right to communicate with endorsing agents upon matters that impact its chaplains' integrity and professional standards.

- ◆ The Chaplaincy Administrator, in consultation with the appropriate Regional Chaplaincy Administrator, will communicate with the endorsers.

(3) The endorsing agent will notify the Chaplaincy Administrator of loss or withdrawal of endorsement for any reason. In addition, the affected Chaplain must notify the Chaplaincy Administrator immediately upon loss of endorsement.

(4) If a separation from employment between a Chaplain and the Bureau occurs, the Chaplaincy Administrator is to provide written notification to the appointed endorser regarding termination of employment.

**11. REASSIGNMENT AND PROMOTION PROCEDURES FOR CURRENT BUREAU CHAPLAINS.** Chaplains who have completed their trial period are eligible for all announced chaplaincy vacancies. All legal requirements during the selection process regarding priority consideration and veteran's preference will be followed. Should there be specific requirements for the advertised position, the requirements will be delineated in the vacancy announcement. The Bureau's legitimate business needs are always a factor in determining assignment.

**a. Reassignment Procedures for Staff and Department Head Chaplains (GS-060-12)**

(1) The institution with the vacancy will prepare an SF-52, and forward it to the Regional Office for the Regional Director's signature. Once the SF-52 has been signed, the vacancy is announced nation-wide as a position for staff chaplain (GS-060-12), or department head chaplain (GS-060-12).

(2) Interested Chaplains are encouraged to apply for the announced vacancy. A memo will be forwarded to the Regional Chaplaincy Administrator on or before the closing date through the applicant's immediate supervisor. Applicants may submit supplemental materials which demonstrate their accomplishments.

(3) The names of all applicants will be presented to the selecting official who makes the selection after consulting with:

- ◆ Assistant Director, Correctional Programs Division,
- ◆ the appropriate Regional Chaplaincy Administrator, and
- ◆ the Warden.

Reference checking of all applicants under consideration will be done in accord with Bureau policy.

(4) The Warden, the selected Chaplain, and the current employing institution will establish a reporting date for the Chaplain. If 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.

**b. Promotion Procedures for Supervisory Chaplain (GS-060-13)**

(1) The institution with the vacancy will prepare an SF-52 and forward it to the Regional Office for the Regional Director's signature. Once the SF-52 has been signed, the vacancy is announced nation-wide as a position for Supervisory Chaplain (GS-060-13).

(2) Interested Chaplains are encouraged to apply for the announced vacancy. The applicant must respond in writing to a series of questions in order to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject areas addressed. The questions used will be the same for all applicants. Applicants may include supplemental materials which demonstrate their accomplishments.

This written response will be forwarded to the Regional Chaplaincy Administrator on or before the closing date through the applicant's immediate supervisor.

(3) The names of all applicants will be presented to the selecting official who makes the selection after consulting with:

- ◆ Assistant Director, Correctional Programs Division,
- ◆ the appropriate Regional Chaplaincy Administrator, and
- ◆ the Warden.

Reference checking of all applicants under consideration will be done in accordance with current Bureau policy.

(4) The Warden, the selected Chaplain, and the current employing institution will establish a reporting date for the Chaplain. If faculties are required for the ministry's function, the Chaplain must have received them from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in which the institution is located before a reporting date is established.

**c. Promotion Procedures for Regional and Central Office Chaplaincy Positions.** Applicants for the Regional Chaplain, Chaplaincy Program Review Examiner (GS-060 series), and Branch Chaplaincy positions are to follow the same procedures as outlined above with the designated selecting official signing the SF-52.

12. **DUTIES AND WORK SCHEDULES OF STAFF CHAPLAINS.** At a minimum, Chaplains in institutions are required as a function of their ministry to:

a. Provide coverage seven days a week, evenings, and weekends to meet inmate religious needs (five days a week for one Chaplain institutions).

- ◆ All chaplains must work **two evenings per week**. While some chaplains may prefer evening hours, chaplains will not be required to work more than three evenings per week.

b. Share pastoral duties, supervision of inmate groups, and administrative functions equitably.

c. Work on their weekly day of religious observance and lead the religious service regularly. Chaplains are also required to work on the seasonal holy days of their faith tradition.

d. When staff members are needed to cover emergency posts, chaplains will be assigned posts which are consistent with their pastoral role.

13. **MANDATORY TRAINING FOR CHAPLAINS**

a. Newly hired chaplains, including chaplain trainees, must complete:

- ◆ New Chaplains' Training (24073) within 12 months of entry into the position (MSTC funded (8/14/92)); and
- ◆ New Chaplains OJT (11060) within 12 months of entry into position. This program will be supervised by the Department Head Chaplain or the Regional Chaplain, if the institution has no Department Head Chaplain. Upon completion, documentation will be forwarded to the EDM to receive training credit.

b. All chaplains must complete a three-day training program on Religious Beliefs and Practices of Inmates every four years. In addition, all chaplains will participate in a Program Review in accordance with the policy on Program Review.

Newly hired Chaplains are eligible to participate in the three-day training program after completing the first year of their trial period.

c. All chaplains must complete Crisis Response Team (CRT) training within the first five years of employment.

**14. BUREAU OF PRISONS FORMS.** The following BP-Forms will be used in conjunction with this Program Statement.

- ◆ Chaplaincy Application Instructions (BP-S677)
- ◆ Chaplaincy Candidate Supplemental Information (BP-S678)
- ◆ Ecclesiastical Endorsement for Chaplains (BP-S679)
- ◆ Chaplaincy Candidate Certification and Authorization (BP-S680)
- ◆ Vacancy Announcement for Chaplains (GS-060-12) (BP-S681)
- ◆ Chaplain Trainee Certification and Authorization with Standard Mobility Statement (BP-S682)
- ◆ Chaplaincy Application Notification Checklist (BP-S683)
- ◆ Vacancy Announcements for Chaplains (GS-060-13) (BP-S688)
- ◆ Resume containing information in the brochure "Applying for a Federal Job" **or** using "Optional Application for Federal Employment" (OF-612)
- ◆ Release of Information Forms
  1. Authorization for Release of Information (SF-85P)
  2. Authorization for Release of Medical Information (SF-85P)
  3. Credit Release Authorization (see the Human Resource Management Manual)

/s/  
Kathleen Hawk Sawyer  
Director