



Chaplaincy Endorsement

Chaplaincy endorsement is a professional credential that affirms to an agency or employer that a chaplain or pastoral counselor has met the requirements of the denomination to provide ministry in a specialized setting. It also affirms that the individual is a member in good standing of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Endorsement creates a covenant of mutual commitment, accountability and support between the chaplain and the denomination. It states a level of denominational connection and a standard of excellence to the agency or employer. Within the SBC, the Chaplains Commission grants endorsement.

Why be endorsed as an SBC Chaplain?

Endorsement is required by almost all agencies and employers that use chaplains. Documentation (government/agency form or NAMB letter) indicating endorsement is usually required as part of the hiring application process. Some organizations require that the endorsement is updated at periodic intervals. Endorsement is a significant step toward achieving the highest levels of professional certification.

What is the endorsement process?

A first-time endorsement application requires approximately two months for processing and approval by the Chaplains Commission. There is no fee or cost for SBC endorsement.

The chaplain applicant initiates the endorsement process by clicking on the appropriate Chaplaincy “Apply” button. The application process begins by registering in NAMB’s application portal.

Once you are registered, you will be contacted via email to complete the process. There are a variety of qualifications and expectations for chaplaincy ministry. These qualifications and expectations come from the using agency and the Chaplains Commission. A consultant from the Chaplaincy Team will contact you to review the qualifications. Once you are pre-qualified, you will be emailed instructions for submitting an application for endorsement and supporting documents.

When the file is complete, one of the team consultants will read your materials and provide feedback to you. Eventually your file will be presented to the Chaplain Commission, a group of trustees assigned to the North American Mission Board.

In order to complete your application file, additional documents will be requested according to the type of chaplaincy. All applicants must submit a current photo and ensure that the Chaplaincy Team receives the completed references. Other documents, if applicable, are a copy of Ordination Certificate and Official Transcript for the qualifying degree, and the local SBC church’s Affirmation Letter (sample will be provided).

If you are applying for a chaplaincy endorsement other than military, VA or Federal Bureau of Prisons, provide the name of the using agency (e.g., the corporation, hospital, police dept., etc.), the name of the individual receiving your endorsement, and the using agency’s address.

All chaplain endorsements are to a specific ministry position. Any change in that position will require an update or additional endorsement. It is the responsibility of the chaplain to initiate the process for updating an endorsement. After notifying the SBC Chaplaincy Team, at least four weeks should be allowed for the update endorsement process.