

MidAmerica District Institutional / Non-Federal Chaplain Policy

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Goal of Chaplaincy Ministries

The goal of Institutional Chaplain Ministries in The Christian and Missionary Alliance is to fulfill the Great Commission and the distinctive of the four-fold gospel of the C&MA by living and proclaiming Colossians 1:27, *“God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

This is accomplished by providing pastoral support to C&MA chaplains, equipping them for spiritual support in their unique ministries, and fostering understanding of chaplain ministries throughout the MidAmerica District. Since it is the goal of the MidAmerica District to reach all people in our District with the message of Jesus Christ, our chaplains are positioned uniquely in places of service that often are unreachable through the efforts of traditional pastoral care.

The chaplain serves with the authority of the MidAmerica District, but outside of the authority of a local C&MA church. It is the District’s desire that the chaplain find a local C&MA church or some other local likeminded church through which that chaplain could share spiritual giftedness, resources, and connectedness to maintain a healthy spiritual dynamic in their life. The local church in turn could provide spiritual community, worship, and biblical nourishment to the chaplain as a way of building a relationship with a missions minded servant of Christ.

The MidAmerica District provides training in the District on the five characteristics of an Official Worker. Every chaplain in the District is expected to work with the District to develop a Christ-centered character, an empowered ministry, a spiritual leadership, a healthy living theology, and an Alliance alignment.

Chaplains are expected to be competent and skilled in the following areas: faith and spiritual integration, crisis intervention, cultural and spiritual diversity, ethics, advocacy, integration of story into a faith perspective, child and adult abuse law, ordinance and ritual support, end of life issues, bereavement and grief, performance improvement, pastoral care to diverse groups, continuum of care, spiritual assessment and self-care. Being trained and competent in the ministry of the local church is not the same as being trained and competent as a chaplain in institutional Chaplaincy.

C&MA chaplains that fall under these guidelines include, but are not limited to: city missions, corporate and/or work place, hospitals, hospice, law enforcement and fire, long-term care and assisted living, RV parks, state and local prison, and sports chaplains.

Ecclesiastical Accreditation by the MidAmerica District of The C&MA

Definition of Ecclesiastical Accreditation

Ecclesiastical accreditation is the formal recognition by The Christian and Missionary Alliance that an individual has met the required standards for theological and pastoral competence to serve in a specific ministry of specialized pastoral care.

Ecclesiastical accreditation attests that an individual has presented evidence of having special education, experience, competence, and aptitude to serve as its representative in chaplaincy ministry. Accreditation also signifies good standing within the C&MA and as such is subject to the ecclesiastical authority of the C&MA.

Ecclesiastical accreditation is a function of the church (The Christian and Missionary Alliance) and therefore is distinguished from the certification process for competence granted from professional organizations. All professional certifying agencies and most institutions using chaplains and professional counselors require accreditation or ecclesiastical approval. Some organizations and certifying associations require national ecclesiastical accreditation. This level is provided by the vice president of Church Ministries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Who Needs Accreditation?

All C&MA persons who represent the C&MA in the role of chaplain and/or counselor must receive ecclesiastical accreditation for their ministry.

Standards for accreditation may include a formal relationship and certification by the appropriate national professional pastoral care organization. Individuals accredited as institutional chaplains are encouraged to seek professional certification in their area of chaplaincy. The collegiality and opportunities for professional growth and development offered through professional certifying associations provides vital support for institutional chaplains.

By encouraging professional certification, the C&MA entrusts the assessment of professional skills, conceptual knowledge, and competence in certain specific area(s) of specialization to a certifying organization. It also recognizes that these organizations offer means of accountability for professional practice based on codes of ethics as well as support and relationships not always available within the C&MA.

Those recognized include:

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)
- American Association for Mental Retardation (AAMR)
- American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
- American Correctional Chaplains Association (ACCA)
- Association of Certified Christian Chaplains (ACCC)
- Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)
- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
- International Conference of Police (and Fire) Chaplains (ICPC)
- National Institute of Business & Industrial Chaplaincy (NIBIC)
- National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC)
- Hospital Chaplains' Ministry of America, Inc. (HCMA)
- College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy (CPSP)
- Spiritual Care Association (*Formerly Health Care Chaplaincy Network*) (SCA)

Roles and Responsibilities in the Accreditation Process

The District Superintendent provides overall leadership and responsibility for the accreditation process unless a national accreditation is required for chaplain certification by the employee organization. The District Superintendent retains the responsibility for the Official Worker as it pertains to their license, ordination/consecration, discipline and appeal.

Becoming an accredited, licensed Official Worker in the MidAmerica District is a process that also involves becoming part of the MidAmerica District family. The District Superintendent may, at his discretion, reach out to one of the current chaplains for input in the application process of a new chaplain. The District recognizes that each chaplain has a specialty, and it is possible the District Superintendent may want input from a current chaplain regarding certifications, experience, and denominational fit.

An anticipated outcome of the accreditation process is to discover how the MidAmerica District can provide encouragement to the applicant in the achievement of his or her goals for ministry and how the chaplain can provide support to the MidAmerica District in reaching the people of this District with the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Core Standards for Accreditation

Anyone desiring to serve as a chaplain in the MidAmerica District will begin the chaplain accreditation process by submitting an initial application through the C&MA website. The MidAmerica District staff will receive that application and help the chaplain navigate his or her way to the point of sitting for an accreditation interview with members of our Licensing, Ordination and Consecration Council. This accreditation will serve as his or her Certificate of Endorsement. Some organizations use the term Endorsement. This District uses the term Accreditation. Following the chaplain's appointment to a specific ministry position, the MidAmerica District will license the chaplain as an Official Worker with the C&MA. All requirements for accreditation can be found in the MidAmerica District Accreditation Handbook.

The Certificate of Accreditation from the MidAmerica District will remain in effect unless the chaplain and the District Superintendent determine they are no longer in a mutually beneficial relationship. If a chaplain resigns or is removed from ministry, he or she will contact the District Superintendent to determine if the Certificate of Accreditation can stay active depending on the possibility of a future chaplain assignment.

Categories of Chaplain Accreditation

The accreditation process is under the authority of the District Superintendent unless a national accreditation is required by the certification association or employee organization. The individual representing the national accreditation serves under and directly reports to the vice president of Church Ministries for The Christian and Missionary Alliance. All chaplains who serve with the MidAmerica District will submit a written, yearly chaplain report to the District Superintendent.

Categories:

1. Chaplains who are strictly volunteers, whose chaplain ministry is secondary to their primary ministry, who do not need certification, shall report to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendent will recognize the contribution this chaplain brings to the District, but will not issue a Certificate of Accreditation.
2. Chaplains in Clinical Pastoral Education will be followed during their training period. These chaplains are considered to be in training and will contact the District Superintendent as they approach the end of their training period.

3. Chaplains who are volunteers, but who need certification (example: ICPC – Police Chaplains or FFC – Federation of Fire Chaplains, first Responder Chaplain, SCA) and part time paid chaplains who need formal accreditation from the District Superintendent as licensed clergy will receive a Certificate of Accreditation and will be under the authority of the District Superintendent.
4. Chaplains who are full time, PT paid (*regardless of being paid by an institution or through raising of own support*) will need a Certificate of Accreditation from the District Superintendent. Those chaplains requiring national accreditation will receive their certificate from the representative of the vice president of Church Ministries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Requests for serving with the Alliance

If a chaplain applicant contacts the MidAmerica District regarding institutional chaplaincy and ecclesiastical accreditation, the request will follow this path.

1. The District Office will direct the applicant to the web site application.
2. Once the application is completed, the District Superintendent will consult with District chaplains to determine denominational fit.
3. The applicant will be assigned a mentor and will prepare for his or her accreditation interview.
4. The applicant will meet with the District Licensing, Ordination and Consecration Council for said interview.
5. The participants in this interview will make one of the following recommendations: Approval, Approval with provisions, or Not recommended for approval.
6. The District Superintendent will be notified of the recommendations if he is not present.

District Relationship

The District Superintendent will recommend continued licensure based on:

1. Did this chaplain submit an annual report? (Annual Report attached)
2. Is this chaplain still involved in some type of chaplain ministry?
3. Does this chaplain continue to minister within the doctrine and theology of The Christian and Missionary Alliance?
4. It is the desire of the MidAmerica District office that C&MA chaplains participate in continuing education and gain specialized training for their places of employment. If the chaplain seeks additional education, certification, or receives merits of additional training, copies of these awards will be sent, as a responsibility of the chaplain, to the MidAmerica District Office to continually update the chaplain's file.
5. It is the chaplain's responsibility to inform the MidAmerica District with the name, address and contact information of their supervisor at their place of employment or charge of responsibility.

The District Superintendent will seek to develop an open line of communication with each chaplain in the District and will share prayer requests from these specialized ministries, recommend training for these chaplains, and advocate for those chaplains who have special needs.

As District Official Workers, chaplains can receive financial support in the areas of counseling and care, sabbatical scholarships, leadership development and educational grants. The MidAmerica District will not have a "Chaplain's Fund," as was the policy of the National Office, but will provide for the needs of our chaplains from our District Operating Budget (DOB).

All funding for the MidAmerica District ministry and support is through the DOB. Giving to the DOB is not a requirement for accreditation for chaplains. As an anticipated outcome of our mutual relationship between the District and each chaplain, some type of support to the District is encouraged.

Discipline and Restoration Procedures

As official workers in The C&MA, chaplains fall under the Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration and Appeal as outlined in The C&MA Manual. (See Section E8 of the Manual.)

Review of Policy

A review of this policy document will be managed by DEXCOM and will be filed in the MidAmerica District Office.