

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: OCT - 8 2019

From: Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services (10A2)

Subj: Chaplain Staffing Procedures (VIEWS #01462027)

To: Acting Director of Caregiver Support Program, Care Management and Social Work Services (10P4C)
Veterans Integrated Service Network Directors (VISN)
VISN Human Resources Officers

1. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Office of Workforce Management and Consulting (WMC), in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), has conducted significant research regarding the chaplain staffing procedures for considering former VHA Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) health professions trainees for employment without rating and ranking, through applicant supply files, and/or on separate certificates of eligibles.
2. The Chaplain GS-0060 occupation is covered by the Title 5 Excepted Service. 5 C.F.R. § 302.101(c) provides that agencies are not required to apply the appointment procedures of Title 5, Part 302 (i.e., rating and ranking) for excepted service positions, including chaplains. However, VA has opted to require rating and ranking of chaplains by its own policy as outlined in VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, Part II, Chapter 2, Section C, Paragraph 6. VHA's practice of not rating and ranking CPE candidates, as described in VHA Directive 1111(1), is inconsistent with the appointment procedures established in VA policy.
3. In addition, VHA's practice of placing CPE candidates on a separate certificate of eligibles is not permitted in VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Chapter 2, Section C, Paragraph 6(d), and may appear to be circumventing the requirement to apply the principles of veterans' preference pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 302.101(c).
4. Effective October 13, 2019, VHA must comply as follows:
 - a. VHA Human Resources offices and Chaplain Services must immediately discontinue the practice described in VHA Directive 1111(1), Spiritual and Pastoral Care in the Veterans Health Administration, Section 5.b.(4)(f), (g) and (h) allowing CPE participant chaplain candidates who have completed a 1-year CPE Program in a VA health care facility to be considered for employment and/or be appointed without numerical rating and ranking, or be placed on separate certificates of eligibles.

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- b. The National VA Chaplain Service, in collaboration with WMC, has begun the process to revise VHA Directive 1111(1), to ensure consistency with VA Handbook 5005. Publication of the revised directive is expected in Fiscal Year 2020.
 - c. Facility Chief Chaplains and Human Resources Officers should collaborate to ensure any applicants on file are made aware of this change and the requirement to apply for open vacancies on USAJOBS. Application materials should then be shredded or returned to the applicant.
 - d. Henceforth, all applicants must be submitted to the National VA Chaplain Service and be appropriately rated and ranked by the Board of Excepted Service Examiners (BESE) before a certificate of eligibles will be referred.
 - e. Chaplain selectees who have received a firm offer of employment and have an established Entrance on Duty date that is on or before October 13, 2019, may be appointed.
5. Policy related questions may be addressed to Carla Burns, Human Resources Consultant, Workforce Management and Consulting, HR Center of Expertise, by telephone at (562) 338-3042 or by email to carla.burns@va.gov. Questions regarding recruitment requests or the Chaplain BESE process may be addressed to the National VA Chaplain Service mailbox at CHAPVACO@med.va.gov.



Jessica Bonjorni

cc: All VA Medical Center Directors (00)
Chief Chaplain Services
All Chief Human Resources Officers
Office of Academic Affiliations (10X1)
VHACO Servicing Human Resources Office, WMC