

VA San Diego Healthcare System Clinical Pastoral Education

Frequently Asked Questions:

What programs do you have? We have a full-time, one-year Residency program, which starts the last Monday of August. VA Residents earn four units of ACPE credit, and receive a stipend from the VA. We also have a second year, specialty CPE Fellowship program, which starts at the same time.

How do I apply? If you are interested in applying for any CPE program, you will need to complete an ACPE application, located at: <https://acpe.edu/education/cpe-students/cpe-application>. Please read the instructions on the application signature page thoroughly, and sign the application (an e-signature is fine). The responses for questions #2-6 typically run 7-10 single spaced pages, although there is no specific page limit. Please submit a 1-2 page resume for question #13. You are encouraged to save the essays as one document and submit your application via email to michelle.kirby@va.gov. If you prefer, applications can be mailed to: San Diego VA-DoD CPE Center; 3350 La Jolla Village Dr (008); San Diego, CA 92161.

What is the cost? There is no application fee or tuition for CPE in the VA.

Can I use the same essays from my last unit of CPE? If you have completed CPE previously, your application essays should reflect what you have learned about yourself and your spiritual journey. Be sure to re-read the application instructions, especially Questions 5 and 6, and update your essays accordingly. Applications submitted for Residency and Fellowship without a verbatim may not be considered.

When will I get an interview? After we receive your application, we will review your application for completeness. At that point, we will email you for further documentation and/or to set up an interview. If you do not hear from us within two weeks of applying, you may want to contact us to ensure that we received your application. It is our policy not to offer feedback to potential students about your application. You may want to seek feedback about your application from a mentor or trusted colleague before submitting your packet for admission. Please be aware that we routinely receive applications for potential students with significant ministry experience and/or 1-2 units of CPE. Applicants may not be interviewed who are underqualified, or who offer minimal responses to the essay questions.

What are you looking for in the interview? CPE is an educational program in a professional, clinical environment. Therefore, we screen potential students for their capacity to participate in intensive Clinical Pastoral Education with peers, educators, and professional chaplains. Students must be able to self-reflect, receive feedback, communicate effectively in English, and provide spiritual care to diverse Veterans in a secular, government institution.

What can I do to prepare for my interview? It may be helpful to speak with a chaplain mentor, faith group leader, or Spiritual Director who has completed CPE. We are looking for candidates motivated to become professional chaplains, or seeking to complete CPE for their professional development. We do not expect applicants to have extensive hospital chaplaincy experience. However, we do expect applicants to have goals for learning about clinical chaplaincy. You may want to peruse the ACPE website (www.acpe.edu) for more information or a book on chaplaincy like *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo.

When do you accept applications? Applications are received on a rolling basis, until all positions are filled. Once the positions for the upcoming program have been filled, your application may be held on a waiting list or considered for the next available program. Applicants are notified if the positions are filled.

What does a typical week look like? The weekly schedule for the residency is Monday-Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. The Residency group meets for 9 hours per week, typically 6 hours on Tuesdays at the Naval Medical Readiness and Training Command, San Diego in Balboa Park, and three hours on Thursdays at the VA San Diego, in La Jolla. Residents meet with the Educator once a week for an hour, and the remainder of their time (30 hours/week) is spent in clinical time, visiting patients, leading Spirituality groups, writing chart notes, interdisciplinary team meetings, and/or meeting with staff.

What are the hours? Every CPE unit includes 300 clinical hours and 100 educational hours. Residency units are full time, 40 hours/week for 10 weeks, with clinical breaks between units when students can take breaks for leave.

What are your fellowship specialties? The CPE fellowship program is a second year of CPE specializing in Mental Health chaplaincy and/or working toward Certified Educator CPE. The fellows complete 100 educational and 300 clinical hours per unit. Roughly half of the clinical hours are spent in structured CPE group learning, and the remaining hours are individually structured based on the students' learning goals.

What is the PSR fellowship? The VA San Diego is able to place up to one chaplain fellow in the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Oriented Services fellowship (or PSR fellowship). Please see the Psychology training internships for their program brochure: <https://www.va.gov/san-diego-health-care/work-with-us/internships-and-fellowships/psychology-internship-and-fellowship-programs/#va-interprofessional-fellowshi>.

Do you offer stipends? Yes. CPE Residents and Fellows are paid a stipend through the VA Office of Academic Affiliations. The amount increases slightly each year. For FY 2022, the first year stipend is \$33.9K and the second year is \$36.7K.

Do you offer housing? We do not provide housing assistance. It is highly recommended that students familiarize themselves with the San Diego housing market before applying to the program.

What are the requirements?

- **Residency:** Applicants must be U.S. citizens and have a Masters of Divinity from a school recognized by the Department of Education, or an M.Div. equivalent, as defined by the Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc:
<https://bcciprofessionalchaplains.org/content.asp?pl=19&contentid=19>.
At least one year of ministerial experience, and a previous unit of CPE *is preferred*.
- **Specialty/Fellowship:** In addition to the requirements for Residency, applicants must have at least four previous units of CPE.

Who can I contact for more information?

Chaplain Michelle Kirby, ACPE Certified Educator
858-552-8585, ext 7675
Michelle.kirby@va.gov

Is the program accredited with ACPE? The San Diego VA-DoD Center is accredited by ACPE: *The Standard for Spiritual Care & Education* to provide Level I/II, and Certified Educator CPE. For more information, contact ACPE; We Work, Floor 4 , 120 West Trinity Place, Decatur, GA 30030. (404) 320-1472. www.acpe.edu.

Can I take CPE online? The residency program is designed for in-person, hands-on learning. CPE is an experience of providing ministry in the hospital setting under supervision. There are programs that allow for telecommuting and online participation. You can learn more about programs that offer online options at www.acpe.edu.

What is Extended CPE? An extended unit is a part-time CPE Intern unit in which the standard 400 hours of clinical and educational time is “extended.” We do not currently offer an extended program.