

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY
OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 52-106

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Chaplain

**RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONAL
DEFERMENT PROGRAM**

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 52-1, *Chaplain Corps*, and AFPD 36-20, *Recruiting Programs and Accession of Air Force Military Personnel*. This instruction outlines the eligibility criteria, application, and participation process required for the Religious Professional Deferment Program, as well as the managerial and implementation roles and responsibilities of the various offices involved. This instruction applies to all civilian employees and uniformed members of the Regular Air Force (RegAF), the Air Force Reserve (AFR), and the Air National Guard (ANG). Ensure all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule located in the Air Force Records Information Management System. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) listed above using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate chain of command. This publication requires the collection and/or maintenance of information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974. The authorities to collect or maintain the records prescribed in the publication are 10 United States Code Section 9013, Secretary of the Air Force; Executive Order 9397 (SSN), as amended; and Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1304.28, *Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*. The applicable system of records notices (SORNs) F036 Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) B, Air Force Recruiting Information Support System – Reserve Records, F065 AFRC C, Air Reserve Orders Writing System – Reserve Records, F036 Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) M, ARPC Case Management System, F036 Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) C, Military Personnel Records

System, F033 AFRC A, Reserve Participation Management System Records are available at: <http://dpclo.defense.gov/Privacy/SORNs.aspx>. This instruction will not be supplemented. The authorities to waive wing/unit level requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier (“T-0, T-1, T-2, T-3”) number following the compliance statement. See AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority, or alternately, to the requestor’s commander for non-tiered compliance items.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This instruction has been significantly revised and should be read in its entirety. Major changes include: The Religious Professional Scholarship Program has ceased accepting new applicants and references to this program have been eliminated, whereas the Religious Professional Deferment Program (RPDP) will continue for the development and management of chaplain candidates.

Chapter 1

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1. Religious Professional Deferment Program.

1.1.1. RPDP is an incentive program for those interested in filling critical high-demand, low-density religious faith group needs of the Air Force. RPDP is open to all prospective Total Force applicants, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) and United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) cadets. RPDP allows approved, qualified candidates to be appointed as Ready Reservists, upon approval for original reserve appointment from the Secretary of Defense (SecDef), and become participants in the AF Chaplain Candidate Program. Once program and ecclesiastical requirements are met and upon AF/HC approval, candidates must be resubmitted for SecDef approval to reappoint as chaplains in the AF Reserve.

1.1.2. RPDP defers any prior outstanding active duty service commitment until the candidate successfully completes the program, voluntarily withdraws from the program, or is removed from the program. At that point each candidate must complete any outstanding active duty service commitment. **(T-1)**. RPDP does not provide financial compensation for the candidates.

Chapter 2

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. AF Chief of Chaplains develops policy. Establishes program goals, objectives, requirements, and procedures to meet chaplain recruiting requirements; selects participants and alternates from qualified applicants; and assists in accessing qualified commissioned officers onto active duty.

2.2. The Chief of Personnel, Budget and Readiness Division (AF/HCP) is responsible for: Managing RPDP and conducting review panels to determine requirements of the Chaplain Corps.

2.3. Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS), Recruiting Service Operations Division, Chaplain Branch (RSOH).

2.3.1. Will implement policy and procedures, including review panels for participant recommendations. **(T-1)**. Will serve as primary point of contact for participant inquiries, and will recruit and advertise to increase applications to the program. **(T-1)**.

2.3.2. Will review the progress of participants annually. **(T-1)**.

2.3.3. Will review all requests for inter-service transfers and will provide AFRC/HC recommendations to approve/disapprove requests. **(T-1)**. Applicants are identified as eligible if they meet requirements in accordance with DoDI 1304.28. **(T-0)**.

2.3.4. Will convene review panels, as required, to evaluate and recommend best qualified applicants. **(T-1)**. Will forward RPDP selected applicant packages to AF/HCP and AFRC/HC for appointing as second lieutenants in the Chaplain Candidate Program. **(T-1)**.

2.4. USAFA and AFROTC.

2.4.1. USAFA/DP and/or AFROTC Detachments shall notify all cadets of the RPDP. **(T-2)**.

2.4.2. USAFA/HC shall serve as liaison with AFRS/RSOH and assist cadets applying for RPDP. **(T-2)**. AFROTC cadets may contact AFRS/RSOH for information on applying for RPDP.

2.4.3. USAFA/HC shall serve as liaison with AFRS/RSOH and AFRC/HC to commission second lieutenant chaplain candidates upon graduation. **(T-2)**.

2.5. Upon request of AFRC, AFPC (Air Force Personnel Center)/DP2S may determine: Whether officers disenrolled from RPDP are qualified to fill validated line officer accession goals. As required, AFPC/DP2S classifies and orders disenrolled participants to active duty.

2.6. Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accessions and Citizen Development shall : Conduct Total Force Officer Training and allocate class seats to accommodate participants in the RPDP. **(T-1)**. It shall also serve as liaison with AFRS/RSOH and AFRC/HC to commission second lieutenant chaplain candidates upon graduation. **(T-1)**.

2.7. AFPC.

2.7.1. Will implement policies and procedures, to include publishing Air Force Reserve appointment orders after receiving personnel packages and oaths of office from AFRS/RSOH and maintaining Military Personnel Data System. (T-1).

2.7.2. Will assign program participants to the AFRC/Readiness Integration Organization (AFRC/RIO) Det 5 as Category J, with 92R0 duty Air Force speciality code and the Chaplain Candidate personnel accounting symbol code. (T-2).

2.8. AFRC/HC.

2.8.1. Will manage the AF Chaplain Candidate Program which includes the military training portion of the RPDP. (T-1). AFRC/HC shall coordinate with AFRC/RIO and ARPC to ensure the Chaplain Candidate Program is effectively and efficiently managed and that participants have the necessary administrative support. (T-2). See AFI 52-101, *Planning and Organizing*, [paragraph 3.2](#).

2.8.2. Will procure Reserve Personnel Appropriations funding priority school slots for RPDP participants for Total Force Officer Training and Chaplain Candidate Course and active duty tours for RPDP participants. (T-1). Shall arrange active duty tours and mentoring opportunities to ensure the best possible participant preparation for accession to RegAF. (T-2).

2.8.3. In partnership with AFRS/RSOH, shall mentor participants and monitor program progress. (T-2).

2.8.4. Will report cases of failure to meet standards, to perform required active duty tour or to complete Total Force Officer Training or Chaplain Candidate Course to AFRS/RSOH, AF/HCP, and SAF/MRB. (T-1). Shall provide reports on RPDP to AF/HC as requested. (T-1).

2.8.5. When appropriate, shall recommend disenrollment from RPDP, and separation or discharge. (T-1). Will execute discharge actions in accordance with AFI 36-3209, *Separation and Retirement Procedures for Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Members*, upon coordination and AF/HC concurrence. (T-1).

2.8.6. Will manage the government travel card program for chaplain candidates. (T-2).

2.9. AFRC/RIO functions as the: Military Personnel Flight for participant administrative requirements, to include, but not limited to, Total Force Officer Training, Chaplain Candidate Course, active duty tour orders, Defense Finance and Accounting Service issues, and physical reviews in accordance with AFI 48-123, *Medical Examinations and Standards*. Also, AFRC/RIO will provide administrative support for any command actions taken under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Chapter 3

RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONAL DEFERMENT PROGRAM

3.1. Eligibility. An applicant:

- 3.1.1. Must be a U.S. citizen.
- 3.1.2. Must meet the commissioning requirements in AFI 36-2005, *Officer Accessions*, with the exception that applicants may have earned a degree with a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science or higher, or projected to graduate within the next 365 days. **(T-1)**.
- 3.1.3. Must receive letter of recommendation from a listed DoD ecclesiastical endorser. **(T-0)**.
- 3.1.4. If currently enrolled at a qualifying educational institution, must be in good academic standing. **(T-1)**.
- 3.1.5. Must be less than 40 years of age at time of appointment (See AFI 36-2005). **(T-1)**.
- 3.1.6. Must meet recruiting criteria at time of application submission, and with the assistance of AFRS/RSOH and AFPC/DP2H, be reviewed by AF/HCP annually. **(T-1)**.
- 3.1.7. If selected, must satisfy the following criteria prior to beginning RPDP:
 - 3.1.7.1. Must receive ecclesiastical appointment for the AF Chaplain Candidate Program from a listed DoD ecclesiastical endorser meeting the administrative qualifications of DoDI 1304.28. **(T-0)**.
 - 3.1.7.2. Must be accepted for or enrolled and in good academic standing in a post-baccalaureate theology or religious studies graduate degree from a qualified educational institution, as defined in DoDI 1304.28. **(T-0)**.

3.2. Application Process.

- 3.2.1. All prospective applicants (Regular Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, AFROTC or USAFA cadet) should submit RPDP applications to the Chaplain Corps Recruiting Service at AFRS/RSOH, 550 D St. W, Ste 1, Randolph AFB, TX 78150, (Email: afrcs.chaplains@us.af.mil), no later than 01 October of the year prior to commencement of studies.
- 3.2.2. The application package will comply with AFI 36-2005, Chapter 4, in addition to the following:
 - 3.2.2.1. Will include all academic records or transcripts. **(T-1)**.
 - 3.2.2.2. Will include a letter of recommendation for admission into RPDP from a DoD-listed ecclesiastical endorsing agent. **(T-1)**.
 - 3.2.2.3. Will include a letter of acceptance into a post-baccalaureate theological or religious studies program from a qualifying educational institution, in accordance with DoDI 1304.28. **(T-0)**.
 - 3.2.2.4. Will include a personal statement of vocational goals for the RPDP. **(T-1)**. The statement should be typed 10-12 pitch, double-spaced, 2-3 pages in length.

3.3. Accession into the AF Chaplain Candidate Program.

3.3.1. Applicants accepted into the RPDP must be accessed into the AF Reserve to participate in the AF Chaplain Candidate Program (92R) Air Force speciality code, and 963IF1Z1 personnel accounting symbol. **(T-1)**.

3.3.2. RegAF officers or enlisted members selected for RPDP must complete an application for separation from RegAF in accordance with AFI 36-3207, *Separating Commissioned Officers*, or AFI 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*. **(T-1)**. Separation from RegAF and transfer to the AF Reserve must be completed prior to starting the program. **(T-1)**.

3.3.3. When separated or released from RegAF, officers must accept reappointment as second lieutenant chaplain candidates for the resignation of their existing appointment to be accepted. **(T-1)**. Graduating AFROTC cadets selected for the RPDP shall be appointed as second lieutenant chaplain candidates in the AF Reserve in conjunction with their AFROTC commissioning ceremony. **(T-1)**. For all other officers, resignations of previous appointment and reappointment in the Chaplain Candidate Program shall be accomplished to prevent a break in service. **(T-1)**.

3.3.4. USAFA cadets selected for the RPDP take their commissioning oath upon graduation, are given 60 days of leave, separate from RegAF on the 61st day and are accessed into the AF Reserve to participate in the AF Chaplain Candidate Program.

3.4. Program Agreement for RPDP. Participants will agree to comply with this and other applicable instructions and serve any remaining active duty service commitments upon finishing RPDP with a statement added to AF Form 24, *Application For Appointment As Reserve Of The Air Force Or USAF Without Component*. **(T-1)**. Active duty service commitment incurred during AFROTC, USAFA, Officer Training School, etc., or by participating in sponsored educational programs while on active duty (i.e., Airman Scholarship and Commissioning Program, AF tuition assistance program, etc.) must be completed consecutively with any active duty service commitment incurred through sponsored programs as listed above. **(T-1)**.

3.4.1. Participants may be disenrolled from the RPDP for cause or when it is in the best interest of the AF. Causes for disenrollment may include, but are not limited to, the following:

3.4.1.1. Failure to maintain the standards required of AF officers and chaplains with regard to DoD and AF instructions and directives, religious and administrative requirements.

3.4.1.2. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic performance or to meet qualifying educational institution's standards.

3.4.1.3. Failure to complete the academic program within six years as prescribed by the qualifying educational institution and/or ecclesiastical endorsing agent.

3.4.1.4. Loss of ecclesiastical appointment or endorsement to participate.

3.4.2. Disenrollment is subject to approval or disapproval by AF/HCP after coordination with AFRS/RSOH, and AFRC/HC, for any reason described in AFI 1-1, *Air Force Standards*, AFI 36-3207, and AFI 36-3209.

3.5. Separation from the AF. AFRC will initiate and process involuntary separation in accordance with AFI 36-3209, as appropriate. **(T-1)**. Before initiating separation, AFRC shall coordinate with AFPC/DP2S for a determination on whether the officer is qualified to fill validated line officer accession goals and include that information in the separation package. **(T-1)**. Participants may ask for voluntary separation by submitting a tender of resignation of commission in accordance with AFI 36-3209.

Chapter 4

CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE TRAINING

4.1. RPDP participants are appointed as Ready Reservists. They are also candidates in the AF Chaplain Candidate Program, outlined in AFI 36-2005, and this instruction. Once program and ecclesiastical requirements are met and upon AF/HC approval, chaplain candidates are then reappointed as AF Reserve chaplains.

4.1.1. Total Force Officer Training is required for enlisted personnel and civilians selected for RPDP, in accordance with AFI 36-2013, *Officer Training School and Enlisted Commissioning Programs*, who have not graduated from USAFA, AFROTC, or Officer Training School. **(T-1)**. Total Force Officer Training is a prerequisite for any subsequent tour at a military installation. **(T-1)**.

4.1.2. USAF Chaplain Candidate Course, conducted at the AF Chaplain Corps College, is an introductory course for candidates enrolled in the Chaplain Candidate Program and who have completed their first year of school in theology or religious studies.

4.1.3. After the Chaplain Candidate Course, candidates complete annual training tours to receive experience at AF installations under the mentorship of active duty chaplains prior to their appointment as chaplains. AFRC/HC directs active duty tour courses and training in accordance with AFI 36-2254V1, *Reserve Personnel Participation*. **(T-1)**. Each candidate receives a written evaluation after completing an active duty tour at an AF installation, in accordance with AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*. **(T-1)**. Supervisors are required to submit an AF Form 475, *Education/Training Report*, to AFRC/HC at the completion of each supervised training tour. **(T-1)**.

4.2. Chaplain Candidate Training Completion. Upon RPDP completion, the candidate is required to obtain ecclesiastical endorsement as an AF Reserve chaplain. **(T-1)**. Chaplain candidates must meet education and two years religious ministry experience requirements, ordination, as well as obtain a new ecclesiastical endorsement in order to be accessed to the active component as chaplains, in accordance with DoDI 1304.28. **(T-0)**.

STEVEN A SCHAICK
Chaplain, Major General, USAF
Chief of Chaplains

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

Title 10, United States Code, Armed Forces, Sections 9013

Executive Order 9397 (As Amended), Numbering System for Federal Accounts Relating to Individual Persons, 18 November 2008

DoDI 1304.28, Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments, 11 June 2004

AFPD 36-20, Recruiting Programs and Accession of Air Force Military Personnel, 19 February 2019

AFPD 52-1, Chaplain Corps, 05 November 2018

AFI 1-1, Air Force Standards, 07 August 2012

AFI 33-360, Publications and Forms Management, 01 December 2015

AFI 36-2005, Officer Accessions, 02 August 2017

AFI 36-2013, Officer Training School and Enlisted Commissioning Programs, 26 October 2018

AFI 36-2254, Volume 1, Reserve Personnel Participation, 26 May 2010

AFI 36-2406, Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems, 08 November 2016

AFI 36-3207, Separating Commissioned Officers, 09 July 2004

AFI 36-3208, Administrative Separation of Airmen, 09 July 2004

AFI 36-3209, Separation and Retirement Procedures for Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Members, 14 April 2005

AFI 48-123, Medical Examinations and Standards, 05 November 2013

AFI 52-101, Planning and Organizing, 01 April 2019

AFMAN 33-363, Management of Records, 01 March 2008

Adopted Forms

AF Form 24, Application For Appointment As Reserve Of The Air Force Or USAF Without Component

AF Form 475, Education/Training Report

AF Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive

AFR—Air Force Reserve
AFROTC—Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
AFRS—Air Force Recruiting Service
AFRC—Air Force Reserve Command
ANG—Air National Guard
ARPC—Air Reserve Personnel Center
DoD—Department of Defense
DoDI—Department of Defense Instruction
HC—Chaplain Corps
OPR—Office of Primary Responsibility
RegAF—Regular Air Force
RPDP—Religious Professional Deferment Program
USAFA—United States Air Force Academy

Terms

Active Duty Service Commitment—A period of active duty an officer will serve before becoming eligible for voluntary separation or retirement (includes minimum term of service).

Minimum Term of Service—The minimum time an individual is required to serve on active duty.

Religious Professional Deferment Program—An incentive program for potential chaplains who meet critical recruiting requirement criteria and AF and DoD standards. This program succeeds the Religious Professional Scholarship Program.

Total Force Training—Functional training provided for the RegAF, ANG, and AFR.