

Verification of Faith/Religious Group Activity

(Alternative to Religious Body Endorsement)

The American Association of Pastoral Counselors expects persons who are ordained to be endorsed by the designated endorsing agency of their ordaining body. When issues unrelated to ethics or pastoral competence prohibit such endorsement, the applicant is to contact either the Executive Director of AAPC or the Chair of the Regional Certification Committee. Clergy ordained or consecrated by faith communities without official protocol for endorsement, and lay persons, are asked to obtain a **Verification of Faith/Religious Group Activity (VFRGA)**.

Verification Process: The applicant must submit two letters for approval **prior* to submitting their application to their Regional Certification Committee Chair.

1. A letter from the applicant explaining the reason(s) endorsement is not available.
2. A letter from someone to whom the applicant will be accountable for his/her ministry¹ (e.g., a pastor, priest, rabbi, or congregational/organizational board official), documenting the formal relationship between them. This relationship is understood to include the following:
 - a. Recognition and affirmation of the applicant's ministry.
 - b. A process of accountability.
 - c. Expression of support and nurture for the pastoral counselor and his or her family.
 - d. Addressing the Issue of Professional Liability.

The Regional Certification Committee will review these materials. If the committee determines more information is needed, they will suggest specific changes to make the application acceptable.

*** Please have your VFRGA approved *prior* to submitting your application. An approval form can be obtained in the Association Office.**

¹ “Minister” refers to a person who has been authorized by a religious endorsing body through ordination, consecration or equivalent means (as determined by the persons’ religious endorsing body and attested by the appropriate office of the person’s religious endorsing body) to exercise specific religious leadership and service within and on behalf of the religious endorsing body which furthers its purpose and mission and which is supported by a covenant with a local religious body which will oversee his/her work in ministry.