



Note: This document is intended to provide general information to address common questions concerning the legal aspects of having a corporate chaplain. However, it is not intended to be comprehensive or offer specific legal advice for every issue. You are encouraged to seek appropriate professional legal advice for your specific situation.

Is it legal to provide a corporate chaplain for my employees?

Yes. As a private business, you are free to offer a wide-array of benefits and support for your employees. Including the support of a chaplain is just another way many employers are recognizing the “whole person” and providing individual care to employees with personal or professional struggles.

Doesn't having a corporate chaplain violate the “separation of church and state”?

No. The so-called “separation of church and state” doctrine has no bearing on private businesses. Even private businesses that receive public funding are permitted to have a chaplain so long as the public funds are not directly used to pay for the chaplain. Any suggestion by a government official to the contrary is likely unlawful and should be reviewed by legal counsel.

Can my employees sue me or file a complaint for having a chaplain?

Not for simply having a chaplain. However, the chaplain should be trained on how to interact with employees to avoid any action that would violate Title VII employment discrimination laws or comparable state laws. Chaplain services should be provided to employees on a voluntary basis with no requirement that an employee utilize the services of the chaplain.

How are Chaplains with California Corporate Chaplains trained to properly engage with employees?

Chaplains with California Corporate Chaplains are trained to care for all employees in the workplace to the level and degree each employee desires. This is accomplished through several components:

Permission. Chaplains do not give anything to an employee that isn't requested by the employee. This is done by listening to the employee and asking the employee what would help them. Any offer of assistance must be accepted by the employee before a chaplain will take any action.

Voluntary. The program is voluntary and no employee is ever forced to interact with the chaplain. At any point in time the employee can opt in or opt out of a relationship with the chaplain.

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Confidentiality. All matters shared with the chaplain are kept in secret between the chaplain and employee (however, certain exceptions mandated by law are followed).

Non-discrimination. Chaplains care for all employees without regard to the employee's race, lifestyle, belief system, ethnic origin, religion, etc. To the extent possible, the chaplains will provide care within the scope of the chaplain's professional skills and personal capabilities to all employees.

Referrals. Our chaplains do not pretend to have all the answers, skills, training, or inclination toward every professional aspect of life. At the employee's request, the chaplain may refer the employee toward the help they desire. All chaplains keep a running and growing list of local and national resources that may be of help to the employee or family member. This may include religious resources, pregnancy, community resources, health resources, shelters, addiction programs, counseling, homelessness, financial, transportation, senior citizens, legal, etc.

What if an employee objects to the presence of a corporate chaplain?

So long as the employee is not required to utilize the services of the chaplain and there is no consequence to the employee for not engaging with the chaplain, the employee has no legal grounds to object. Employees rights are sufficiently protected by accommodating their request not to engage with the chaplain, but they do not have a veto power to demand the elimination of a chaplain simply because they object to the chaplain's presence.