

Chaplain Deployment Reimbursement – Best Practices Guide

I. Chaplains as Deployable Resources under SERP

The State of Florida recognizes Chaplaincy as an official Mental Wellness Typed Resource under the Statewide Emergency Response Plan (SERP). These resources are equivalent in status to CISM Teams, Peer Support, Clinician Response Teams, and K-9 Crisis Teams.

Chaplain Resource Types:

- Type 1: 7 members + 1 Team Leader
- Type 2: 4 members + 1 Team Leader
- Type 3: Single Resource

Required Qualifications:

- Ecclesiastical Endorsement
- Minimum 3 years of fire chaplain experience
- Affiliation with a fire department
- Completion of:
 - - Federation of Fire Chaplains Essentials Course
 - - ICISF CISM course
 - - ICS 100 and 200

II. Deployment Process and Request Mechanism

Triggering Event:

Deployment often follows a Debilitating Critical Incident (DCI) — either an acute traumatic event (e.g., LODD, mass casualty, pediatric fatality) or cumulative stress scenario.

Request Procedure:

1. Local agency contacts County Emergency Management.
2. County EM submits a request via WebEOC to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
3. SEOC routes the request to State ESF 4&9 and FFCA SERP coordination team.
4. SERP leadership assigns chaplains based on availability, event scale, and typing level.

Deployment Guidelines:

- Chaplains operate under the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Resources are scalable—single chaplain to full wellness teams.
- All deployments must be pre-approved through proper SERP channels.

III. Reimbursement Best Practices

Rate Structure:

- \$60/hour contractor rate is recommended and accepted for IMT/IST personnel (non-employee/volunteer chaplains).
- This aligns with other typed resource reimbursement rates recognized by the State.

Documentation Requirements:

1. ICS 214 logs for every deployed hour
2. DEMES time entries (match 214 logs)
3. Invoice from chaplain or agency (must be registered as a vendor with the State)
4. Mission Order or Deployment Authorization
5. Travel and lodging receipts, if applicable

Invoicing Tip:

Ensure the invoice matches your DEMES entries and ICS forms to avoid denial. Submit through your sponsoring agency or directly if approved.

IV. Funding Gaps and Future Considerations

Currently, chaplains not employed by a fire agency may face reimbursement obstacles. However, using the contractor model through IST/IMT assignment has shown success and is replicable.

Recommendations for Agencies:

- Pre-identify and register chaplains as vendors.
- Include chaplains in BHAP planning and SERP rosters.
- Consider MOU/contractor agreements to streamline reimbursement.
- Contracts established ahead of time ensure greater success when navigating procurement procedures.

V. Summary Talking Points for Chiefs

- Chaplains are recognized as deployable responders under Florida SERP.
- Deployment follows formal requests and approval via Emergency Management channels.
- Reimbursement is achievable using standard contractor rates and proper documentation.
- Chaplains play a vital role in responder recovery and mental wellness.