

Chaplaincy Program

833.1 CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM ELEMENTS AND GOALS

Members of the Chaplaincy Program shall support the program's purpose by:

- Attending to the duty to care for the spiritual and emotional needs of Probation employees and their families when invited to do so.
- Respecting the religious limitations of working within a diverse governmental agency (the Probation Department). Probation chaplains should not represent any particular religious denomination. Chaplains should not view their role in the Department as a forum to proselytize employees or their families to their own faith tradition; the faith of the Probation employee supersedes the faith of the attending chaplain.
- Being proactive in serving the needs of those in the Probation Department. Chaplains may respond to any spiritual or religious questions or inquiries initiated by a Probation employee or their family members.
- Being alert to the spiritual and emotional needs of department personnel and their families.
- Respecting all faith traditions, as well as those who subscribe to a non-faith orientation.
- Familiarizing themselves with the role of the San Diego Probation Department in the law enforcement community.

833.2 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chaplains are Department volunteers, and except as otherwise specified within these procedures, are required to comply with Policy 702 Probation Department Volunteers and other applicable department policies. The duties of a chaplain may include the following:

- Serve as a support resource to Probation employees and their family members in managing both professional and personal crises, and in the event of a critical incident.
- Serve with and alongside Employee Wellness, Peer Support and/or Employee Assistance Program services, working together as a team in support of Department employees, including attending in-Service training.
- Provide counsel and comfort to employees & their families in times of illness or trauma.
- Participate in critical incident debriefing or defusing sessions as requested.
- Assist Department officials, when requested, in making notifications to an employee's family and loved ones in the case of serious injury or line-of-duty death.
- Visit Divisions, Facilities, Units, and Offices, attend briefings, and participate in ride-alongs to establish personal relationships of trust with Probation employees.
- Visit sick/injured personnel at home or in the hospital for encouragement or prayer.
- Provide premarital, marital, or relationship counseling, or referrals to the same, as requested by department employees.

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- Alert the department to community concerns and providing input where appropriate.
- Serve as a liaison to other religious leaders in the community.
- Offer invocations, benedictions, prayers, or homilies for official department ceremonies, dedications, graduations, etc.
- Offer services, or assist to arrange services, for department families (i.e. weddings, funerals, religious ceremonies).
- Respond to citizens in need only when specifically requested to do so by a sworn officer or when authorized by the department head.

833.3 QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for Probation Chaplains may include the following:

- Appropriate theological and counseling education and training, preferably a master's degree from an accredited graduate institution or denominational equivalent.
- Endorsement for law enforcement chaplaincy by a recognized religious body.
- At least five years of ministerial experience.
- Current involvement in a ministry, congregation or religious organization in the county.
- A broad base of life experience and professional ministry.
- Demonstrable emotional stability and personal flexibility.
- Openness to further training to enhance the ability to serve the needs of law enforcement personnel and also citizens affected by crisis and trauma.
- A valid California driver's license.
- Possess a confident and secure personality, an approachable spirit, and an amiable disposition and be neither intimidated nor offended by the culture of law enforcement.
- Genuine love, concern and compassion for those in law enforcement.
- A clear recognition that the chaplain's moral standards and daily comportment will be the ultimate criteria by which the chaplain will be either accepted or rejected by sworn and non-sworn employees and their families.

833.4 SELECTION PROCESS

Interested members of the clergy may submit a written application in accordance with Policy 702 Probation Department Volunteers. Applicants should include a recommendation or endorsement for law enforcement chaplaincy from a recognized religious body, their faith's community elders, board (e.g. Christians in Law Enforcement Fellowship, or CLEF) or council. Qualified applicants will be invited to participate in an interview with the Chief Probation Officer's designees (including the Peer Support Program Manager), and they must pass a County volunteer background check as designated by the appointing authority.

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833.5 COMMAND STRUCTURE

Under the general direction of the Chief Probation Officer or designee, Probation Chaplains shall report to the Peer Support Program Manager.

833.6 CONFIDENTIALITY

Any Probation employee may contact a chaplain for services with the assurance that the chaplain will make every effort consistent with Department policy and applicable law to keep conversations confidential. However, a conversation between an employee and a Probation Department Chaplain is not “penitential communication” as defined in California Evidence Code § 1032 and is not covered by any state or federal privilege or protection.

Probation Department Chaplains waive full confidentiality and the right to claim the clergy-penitent privilege while working in the capacity of a Probation Department Chaplain.

Chaplains working with on-duty Probation personnel are mandated reporters if it is disclosed during their conversations that the employee is:

- A danger to self
- A danger to others
- Suspected of child abuse
- Involved in domestic violence
- Suspected of elder abuse

No chaplain will ever be asked to violate their personal religious convictions in the performance of their duties as a Probation Chaplain. Department Chaplains will be familiar with state evidentiary laws and rules pertaining to limits of the clergy-penitent privilege and will inform Department employees when it appears reasonably likely that the employee intends to discuss matters that the chaplain would be obliged to report.