Policy: 2101.6, Chaplain's Program
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the framework, standards, and responsibilities of the Orlando Police Department Chaplains Program. The program is designed to provide emotional, moral, and spiritual support to department personnel, their families, and members of the community during times of crisis or need. This policy outlines the classifications, qualifications, duties, and expectations of chaplains serving in a volunteer capacity, ensuring consistent and ethical service delivery aligned with the Department's mission and values. The Chaplain Program is an extension of the Volunteer Program (Policy 2206).

II. POLICY

The Chaplains Program has been established within the Department to provide emotional, moral, and spiritual assistance and support to employees requesting it, and to assist the Department with victims and the families of victims when deemed necessary.

The code of confidentiality shall exist when privileged information is discussed. Chaplains have no police authority and shall not at any time take enforcement action or represent themselves as sworn police officers.

III. DEFINITIONS

Confidentiality: A principle that protects the privacy of conversations between individuals and chaplains, ensuring that what is shared remains confidential. This means chaplains cannot disclose details of these conversations to anyone else without the explicit permission of the person who shared the information. This protection is rooted in the understanding that individuals need a safe space, except any behavior that requires mandatory reporting to relevant authorities exists.

Ecclesiastical Certification: A professional credential that affirms to an employer that a person in chaplaincy is, or will be, performing a valid ministry of the church, and has presented evidence of calling and training for that ministry. Ecclesiastical Endorsement means that the candidate is a member or minister of the church in good standing and has completed appropriate training for the specialized ministry.

Ordained or Licensed Minister: The individual has been formally recognized and authorized by a religious body or denomination to perform ministerial duties, according to that body's established procedures. This can involve ordination, commissioning, or licensing, depending on the specific religious tradition. They possess the authority to conduct religious worship, perform sacerdotal functions (sacred duties like officiating at weddings, funerals, etc.), and administer ordinances or sacraments according to the doctrines of their church or denomination.

IV. PROCEDURES

1. EMPLOYEE PERSONAL NEEDS

In the event, an employee feels the need to consult with a member of the clergy, a listing of Chaplains by denomination will be available in the Communications Division, and Community Relations Division. After hours, the on-call Chaplain will be available through the Communications Division. The code of confidentiality will exist when privileged information is discussed, except where a crime against children or the elderly, domestic violence, or any behavior that requires mandatory reporting to relevant authorities exists.

Employees who obtain information concerning the hospitalization or death of another employee or a member of an employee's family are encouraged to contact the Chaplain representative within their division or section. This information will be forwarded to the Chaplains.

2. CALL-OUT PROCEDURES

An employee encountering a victim of a crime or a family member of a crime victim needing the services of a Chaplain may initiate the request upon the approval of a supervisor. Communications personnel will notify the on-call Chaplain.

The Community Involvement Section Commander will prepare an on-call schedule of Chaplains and provide copies to the Communications Division, Community Relations Division, and Fiscal Management Section.

3. APPLICATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

To serve within the Orlando Police Department Chaplain Program, applicants must meet the following qualifications, based on their designated chaplain classification:

a. Chaplain Coordinator

- Appointed by the Chief of Police to supervise the Chaplaincy Program.
- Serves as a liaison to area faith-based associations and clergy networks.
- Assists with recruitment, strategic planning, and coordination.
- Provides oversight of the Chaplain Corps, ensures compliance with departmental policies, and serves as a key advisor to the Department on chaplaincy matters.
- Must meet all qualifications of a Chaplain and have demonstrated leadership and administrative capability within the Chaplain Corps.
- Must ensure Chaplains remain in good standing as it relates to their qualifications of Ordained or Licensed Minister and Ecclesiastical Certification.

b. Chaplain

- Must be ordained or licensed as a minister in good standing with a recognized denomination or organized fellowship that maintains established ecclesiastical accountability.
- Must possess an ecclesiastical certification.
- Must have a minimum of five (5) years of direct experience in ministry.
- Must attend recommended training as designated by the Orlando Police Department to obtain Chaplain status.
- Must be available to respond on a 24-hour basis in the event of an emergency.

c. Assistant Chaplain

- Must meet the same general qualifications as a Chaplain, except for being ordained or license requirements.
- This classification is intended for individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to the Chaplain Program but do not fully meet the criteria for Chaplain.
- Only serve in support roles as enumerated in the Volunteer Program, Policy 2206.

d. Honorary Chaplain

- Appointed by the Chief of Police as deemed appropriate.

- This designation applies to chaplains who have previously served but are unable to continue in an active role due to medical conditions or other limiting circumstances. This allows the Department to honor their prior service while maintaining their connection to the program.
- May participate in meetings or supportive capacities but are not expected to fulfill the operational responsibilities of Chaplains or Assistant Chaplains.

General Requirements for All Chaplain Applicants:

- Must never have been convicted of a criminal offense or any offense involving moral turpitude.
- Must not be involved in any profession or business that presents a conflict of interest.
- Must complete the volunteer application available on the Orlando Police Department website. Upon submission, applicants will await contact from the Department's Volunteer Coordinator.
- If approved, the Volunteer Coordinator will forward the application to the Community Involvement Section Commander and the Chaplain Coordinator.
- The Chaplain Coordinator will vet the applicants' qualifications of being an Ordained or Licensed Minister and the Ecclesiastical Certification.
- The applicant will be interviewed by the Chaplain Coordinator and members of the Chaplain Corps.
- Final approval will be determined via the Chain of Command.
- Must be a citizen or legal resident of the United States.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Familiarize themselves thoroughly with the provisions of this policy and OPD's Regulations Manual.
b. Be willing to respond to situations where a Chaplain's presence is requested.
c. Be willing to become involved in training to enhance one's effectiveness in dealing with people and crises.
d. No Chaplain will attend Community or City events in the capacity of Police Chaplain without direct approval from their Chain of Command.
e. Chaplains will be identifiable with a uniform and identification while attending any event representing the Orlando Police Chaplain Corps.
f. Strictly adhere to all confidentiality provisions.
g. Must comply with mandates of Article I, Section 3, of the Florida Constitution, including, "No revenue of the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof shall ever be taken from the public treasury directly or indirectly in aid of any church, sect, or religious denomination or aid of any sectarian institution".
h. Chaplains shall provide services in a nondenominational and ecumenical manner. Chaplains shall not proselytize, disparage other religions, use public resources to aid any church, sect, religious denomination, or sectarian institution in violation of the Florida Constitution, or any manner impose their religious beliefs upon others. Only when specifically requested to do so, they may provide spiritual counseling and guidance that reflects their religious orientation.
i. Chaplains shall not discriminate against any individual because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran status, political affiliation, marital status, or handicap status.
j. Chaplains shall maintain the confidentiality of communications by persons requesting their assistance. Exceptions may only be made by written permission from the person requesting assistance, as required by law, or in the face of a clear and immediate probability of life-threatening injury or death to the person requesting assistance or others.

k. Chaplains have no arrest or enforcement powers and shall not take law enforcement action while performing in their official capacity.
l. Chaplains are authorized to visit agency facilities as necessary for the performance of their duties.
m. Chaplains shall not use their position with the agency, agency-issued credentials, or agency-issued uniform to obtain special privileges or other such personal benefits for themselves or others.

5. PROBATION AND TRAINING

New Chaplains shall be instructed in their duties and responsibilities by the Chaplain Coordinator and members of the Chaplain Corps. Probation will be at least six months.

Probationary Chaplains will shadow members of the Chaplain Corps gaining experience and mentorship in Police Chaplaincy. Probationary Chaplains must go to call-outs, be subject to on-call, and handle administrative duties.

No probationary Chaplain will take the lead on any community or City event.

At the end of the probationary period, the Chaplain Coordinator and members of the Chaplain Corps will evaluate the probationary Chaplain and recommend to the chain of command the probationary Chaplain's progress.

The Chief of Police will approve all new Chaplains appointed to the Chaplain Corps.

Newly appointed Chaplains will attend the following training within 12 months:
(An extension can be made if a course is not available)

- 72-hour Citizen Police Academy
- Police Chaplain Credentialed Association
- Introduction to Law Enforcement Chaplaincy
- Death Notification
- Stress Management
- Ceremonies and Events
- Legal Liability and Confidentiality
- Ethics
- Responding to a Crisis Situation
- Law Enforcement Family
- Substance Abuse
- Suicide
- Officer Injury or Death
- Sensitivity and Diversity
- In-house training instructed within the Orlando Police Department.

Chaplains serve at the pleasure of the Chief of Police, under the command of the Community Involvement Section Commander.

6. EQUIPMENT

Chaplains will be issued the following equipment:

a. Identification card
b. Access card
c. Body Armor and Radio—Chaplains shall always wear protective body armor while driving the Chaplain vehicle and during a ride along with a first responder or any officer assigned to a uniformed function and engaged in field activities. Body armor and Radio are to be checked in and out from the Quartermaster Unit. Contact the On-Duty Watch Commander if after supply hours.
d. Uniform (2.09)
    1. Uniform, issued after the probation period, shall be of a type that is distinguishable from the uniform worn by sworn members.
    2. Class A Uniform – May be worn at awards ceremonies or special events sanctioned by the Chief of Police. It will not be worn by a Chaplain while riding in patrol or with other operational units.
    3. Informal – Pants, golf shirts, and windbreakers are to be used when riding in patrol or with other operational units.
e. Chaplain Vehicle Dashboard Placards-To be used in an official capacity only.
f. Flashlight and Charger

7. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Chaplains Program participants will be held accountable for adherence to the Orlando Police Department Policies, Standard Operating Procedures, Regulations, Laws, and City Ordinances.

a. Chaplains who wish to suspend or discontinue their participation in the program shall notify the Chaplain Coordinator and the Community Involvement Section Commander in writing.

b. Chaplains suspending their participation shall be placed on inactive status for six (6) months. If they wish to return at the end of the six months, they must submit a letter of good standing. The agency will also conduct another background check. If they do not contact the Chaplain Coordinator within the six-month suspension period, their participation in the program will be discontinued. If they rejoin the program any time after being discontinued, they must reapply.

c. In cases where a chaplain is unable to fulfill the duties of their role due to medical issues, disability, or other limiting circumstances, the Chief of Police may designate them as an Honorary Chaplain. This honorary status allows the Department to formally recognize and honor the chaplain's previous service while maintaining their connection to the program. This designation does not require active-duty participation or reapplication and may be reviewed periodically by the Chaplain Coordinator. Honorary Chaplains who wish to return to full duty must submit a letter of good standing and undergo a background check if the status change is less than six (6) months. If the time is greater than six (6) months, the Chaplain must reapply. If approved, the Chaplain Coordinator will provide reintegration training prior to their resumption of duties.

d. When the Chaplain has ended their participation with the Chaplain Program, the member shall return all agency-issued credentials and equipment within seven (7) business days to the Chaplain Coordinator, Community Involvement Section Commander, or designee.

8. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The essence of the Chaplains Program will be a commitment to excellence while providing moral and spiritual assistance.

9. ANNUAL DRIVERS' PHYSICALS

Chaplains who drive the Chaplain vehicle will be required to pass an annual driver's physical with drug screen as outlined under City of Orlando P&P 800, Operators of City Motor Vehicles and Equipment (Annual Physical Exam).

V. FORMS AND APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT A-Uniform Law Enforcement Hearing Date Reset Request

VI. REFERENCES

This policy rescinds Policy and Procedure 2101.5

Related Policies: Not Applicable

Related Laws: Not Applicable