

Georgia Department of Public Safety

Policy Manual

SUBJECT VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN PROGRAM	POLICY NUMBER 21.04
DISTRIBUTION SWORN MEMBERS	REVISED DATE 4/25/2024
	POLICY REVIEWED 4/25/2024

21.04.1 Purpose

This policy sets forth the standards for the Volunteer Chaplain Program of the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS), including selection, training, equipment, and utilization of the chaplains.

21.04.2 Policy

The Chaplain Program is comprised of volunteers and is established to provide an optional resource for sworn members in need of support when alternatives may be unavailable, insufficient, or undesirable. The program is available, for example, to members who may be dealing with stressors unique to law enforcement employment, and who sidestep such conversations with family and friends.

21.04.3 Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of volunteer chaplains include the following:

- A. Read and adhere to DPS Mission Statement and Core Beliefs in Policy #1.01 - Mission and Core Beliefs;
- B. Abide by the U.S. and Georgia Constitution, federal and state laws, and any applicable DPS policy based upon them;
- C. Conduct themselves honorably, ethically, morally, and reasonably, within the standards of the chaplain community;
- D. Complete training provided by DPS for agency operations and critical incident support as offered by the Office of Public Safety Support (OPSS);
- E. Visit or make other contact (e.g., by phone or text) with injured or sick members, when requested by OPSS Staff, a member, a member's immediate family or a close friend;
- F. Attend or participate in the funeral of active or retired employees, when requested by a member, or a member's family;
- G. Provide counseling for personal issues when requested by a member for that member and their immediate family;

- H. Assist with critical incident management when requested by a member of OPSS or the DPS Critical Incident Support Team; and
- I. Receive no compensation of any kind for holding the position or performing duties within the Volunteer Chaplain Program.

21.04.4 Procedures

- A. The Chaplain Program will consist of the Volunteer Chaplaincy Coordinator and Volunteer Chaplains.

- 1. Chaplaincy Coordinator

- a. Qualifications: to qualify for the position of Chaplaincy Coordinator, a candidate shall meet the volunteer chaplain requirements of this policy, and shall
 - 1) Have served as a law enforcement chaplain for at least five (5) years; and
 - 2) Submit a resume detailing his/her qualifications.
- b. If more than one qualified chaplain volunteers to serve as Chaplaincy Coordinator during a vacancy, the OPSS Director shall vet and determine the finalist.
- c. The Chaplaincy Coordinator serves as a volunteer and is not compensated in any manner.
- d. The Chaplaincy Coordinator shall serve for a period of four years.
- e. The Chaplaincy Coordinator shall report directly to the OPSS Director, or designee and shall be responsible for the following:
 - 1) Overseeing the Chaplaincy Program to ensure policy compliance;
 - 2) Verifying the credentials and determining the qualifications of all volunteer chaplain candidates;
 - 3) Coordinating training and events involving the Volunteer Chaplain Program;
 - 4) Being readily available for consultation with the DPS Command Staff regarding issues identified or raised by any volunteer chaplain;
 - 5) Serving as the volunteer chaplain for DPS Headquarters;
 - 6) Communicating with volunteer chaplains to discuss and address areas of mutual concern, and to receive in-put on program improvements; and
 - 7) Preparing Bi-Annual (June and December) reports for the OPSS Director, outlining the activities of all volunteer chaplains, and making recommendations for program improvements.

- 2. Volunteer Chaplains

Applications: to apply for the position of volunteer chaplain, a candidate shall:

- a. Be referred by a DPS employee;
- b. Submit Form (DPS-60 Application for Georgia Department of Public Safety Chaplain) to the OPSS Director; and
- c. List all counties in which they are willing to serve;
- d. Submit to a criminal history background check and driver's history check; and
- e. Not be a current, sworn member of DPS.
- f. The total number of chaplains serving this program shall not exceed 20. However, if more than 20 qualified candidates apply, the selection of 20 shall be based upon the following criteria:
 - 1) Flexibility in counties of service;
 - 2) Diversity;
 - 3) Experience; and
 - 4) Prior service as a DPS volunteer chaplain.
- g. Volunteer chaplains are to serve as a resource to any member who requests assistance without regard to the member or his/her family's race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, religion, pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions, military or veteran status, or other status protected by federal or state law or regulation.
- h. Volunteer chaplains report directly to the Chaplaincy Coordinator and shall submit a monthly report to him/her.
- i. Volunteer chaplains shall serve for a period of four years and may reapply at the end of their service period.

B. Chaplains serve as volunteers and are not compensated in any manner.

C. To the extent that volunteers are available who meet the qualifications set forth in this policy, the Chaplain Program shall reflect the diversity of DPS.

21.04.5 Qualifications

A. The following minimum qualifications shall be met by every volunteer chaplain:

1. Be a spiritual advisor officially endorsed by a recognized religion, to include, but not limited to minister, priest, rabbi, imam, etc.;
2. Have five years' experience in ministry;
3. Maintain a working knowledge of and good relationship with the medical and psychiatric facilities, programs, and other such resources within the counties of service;

4. Possess life experience, professional maturity, emotional stability, and personal flexibility, and
 5. Meet the standards set forth in this policy.
- B. Volunteer chaplain candidates must:
1. Sign an oath stating that the volunteer chaplain supports the United States Constitution, the Georgia Constitution, and the mission of DPS;
 2. Show a personal interest in the DPS Volunteer Chaplain Program by training, work experience, and support of law enforcement;
 3. Be willing to work under the supervision of the Chaplaincy Coordinator;
 4. Be available to respond on a 24-hour basis;
 5. Indicate a willingness to be involved in training that would enhance their effectiveness and efficiency in meeting and dealing with people in a crisis;
 6. Be willing to respond to any situation where the presence of a volunteer chaplain is requested; and
 7. Demonstrate concern and an understanding attitude toward all persons regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, religion, political opinions or affiliations, age, disability, genetic information, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions, military or veteran status, or other status protected by federal or state law or regulation.
- C. Disqualifications – Any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from service as a volunteer chaplain:
1. Intentionally providing false information to DPS;
 2. Any felony conviction;
 3. Conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude.
 4. Any outstanding felony, obstruction charge, or crime of moral turpitude pending adjudication.
 5. Sufficient misdemeanor convictions to establish a pattern of disregard for the law;
 6. Any conviction or plea of *nolo contendere* within the past five years for Driving Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol (DUI) or for any serious traffic offense, including, but not limited to: Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Police Officer, Vehicular Homicide, Failure to Stop, Render Aid, or Leave Information, Reckless Stunt Driving, Organization or Promotion of Illegal Drag Racing, Racing on Highways and Streets, or Laying Drags.
 7. Five or more convictions and/or pleas of *nolo contendere* within the past two years for any moving violations;
 8. Current illegal drug use; and
 9. Any verified action of moral turpitude.

21.04.6 Privileges and Restrictions

- A. Volunteer chaplains must respect and abide by a member's right to reject or discontinue assistance from the chaplain.
- B. Chaplains are not authorized by DPS to carry weapons or become involved in law enforcement activities or duties, regardless of POST certifications.
- C. Misconduct of a chaplain (including any of the behavior outlined in the disqualifiers set forth in this policy) is grounds to be removed from service as a volunteer chaplain by the Chaplaincy Coordinator, OPSS Director and/or the Commissioner.
- D. Volunteer chaplains are not authorized to speak on behalf of DPS.
- E. Volunteer chaplains shall not divulge information of a sensitive nature regarding the operations of DPS or regarding ongoing investigations.
- F. Volunteer chaplains shall be issued a photo identification card unique to the volunteer position which is valid for four years. The identification card is the property of DPS and must be returned upon the conclusion of the volunteer chaplain's service.
 - 1. The identification card shall be displayed when conducting their duties as a volunteer chaplain.
 - 2. Volunteer chaplains shall not use their issued identification card to obtain privileges not afforded to the general public.
 - 3. If an identification card is lost or stolen, the affected volunteer chaplain shall promptly inform the Chaplaincy Coordinator and write a memorandum detailing the circumstances of the loss or theft. The Chaplaincy Coordinator shall make a written request for replacement to the Chief Information Officer and the Director of the Office of Professional Standards.
- G. Attire
 - 1. Volunteer chaplains will be issued a shirt which clearly identifies them as a DPS chaplain, to be worn only while performing official duties as representative of DPS. Volunteer chaplains also may wear other professional attire that represents the volunteer chaplain's faith (e.g., a clerical collar, a yarmulke, or a skullcap).
 - 2. Chaplains shall not wear the uniform of any other agencies while representing DPS.