

Chaplains

Effective Date:	1/7/2026
Revised Date:	1/7/2026
Issuing Authority: Chief Probation Officer	

432.1 PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for San Bernardino County Probation Department chaplains to provide counseling or emotional support to members of the Department, their families, and members of the public.

The San Bernardino County Probation Department shall ensure that department chaplains are properly appointed, trained, and supervised to carry out their responsibilities without financial compensation.

I. Eligibility

- A. Requirements for participation as a chaplain for the Department may include, but are not limited to:
 1. Being above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, be free from addiction to alcohol or other drugs, and excessive debt.
 2. Managing their households, families, and personal affairs well.
 3. Having a good reputation in the community.
 4. Successful completion of an appropriate-level background investigation.
 5. A minimum of five years of successful counseling experience.
 6. Possession of a valid driver's license.
- B. The Chief Probation Officer (CPO) may apply exceptions for eligibility based on organizational needs and the qualifications of the individual.

II. Recruitment

- A. The San Bernardino County Probation Department shall endeavor to recruit and appoint only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral, and professional standards set forth by this department.
- B. All applicants shall be required to meet and pass the same pre-employment procedures as department personnel before appointment.

III. Selection and Appointment

- A. Chaplain candidates shall successfully complete the following process prior to appointment as a chaplain:
 1. Submit the appropriate written application.

San Bernardino County Probation Department

MANUAL

Chaplains

2. Include a recommendation from employers or volunteer programs.
 3. Interview with the Volunteer Coordinator and two members of the Peer Support Board.
 4. Successfully complete an appropriate-level background investigation.
- B. Chaplains are volunteers and serve at the discretion of the CPO. Chaplains shall have no property interest in continued appointment. However, if a chaplain is removed for alleged misconduct, the chaplain will be afforded an opportunity solely to clear his/her name through a liberty interest hearing, which shall be limited to a single appearance before the CPO or the authorized designee.

IV. Identification and Uniforms

- A. As representatives of the Department, chaplains are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Chaplains shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Uniforms and necessary safety equipment will be provided for each chaplain. Identification symbols worn by chaplains shall be different and distinct from those worn by officers through the inclusion of "Chaplain" on the uniform and not reflect any religious affiliation.
- B. Chaplains will be issued San Bernardino County Probation Department identification cards, which must be carried at all times while on-duty. The identification cards will be the standard San Bernardino County Probation Department identification cards, with the exception that "Chaplain" will be indicated on the cards. Chaplains shall be required to return any issued uniforms or department property at the termination of service.
- C. Chaplains shall conform to all uniform regulations and appearance standards of this department.

V. Chaplain Coordinator

- A. The CPO shall delegate certain responsibilities to a chaplain/volunteer coordinator. The coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Operational Services Director or the authorized designee.
- B. The chaplain/volunteer coordinator shall serve as the liaison between the chaplains and the CPO. The function of the coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective chaplain management within the Department, and to direct and assist efforts to jointly provide more productive chaplain services. Under the general direction of the CPO or the authorized designee, chaplains shall report to the chaplain coordinator and/or Watch Commander.
- C. The chaplain coordinator may appoint a senior chaplain or other designee to assist in the coordination of chaplains and their activities.
- D. The responsibilities of the volunteer coordinator or the authorized designee include, but are not limited to:
 1. Recruiting, selecting, and training qualified chaplains.
 2. Conducting chaplain meetings.

San Bernardino County Probation Department

MANUAL

Chaplains

3. Establishing and maintaining a chaplain callout roster.
 4. Maintaining records for each chaplain.
 5. Tracking and evaluating the contribution of chaplains.
 6. Maintaining a record of chaplain schedules and work hours.
 7. Completing and disseminating, as appropriate, all necessary paperwork and information.
 8. Planning periodic recognition events.
 9. Maintaining liaison with other agency chaplain coordinators.
- E. An evaluation of the overall use of chaplains will be conducted on an annual basis by the coordinator.
1. The evaluation report will be submitted to the CPO.

VI. Duties and Responsibilities

- A. Chaplains assist the Department, its members, and the community, as needed. Assignments of chaplains will usually be to augment the Peer Support Program. Chaplains may be assigned to other areas within the Department as needed. Chaplains should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities, and the needs of the Department.
- B. All chaplains will be assigned to duties by the chaplain coordinator or the authorized designee.
- C. Chaplains may not proselytize or attempt to recruit members of the Department or the public into a religious affiliation while representing themselves as chaplains with this department. If there is any question as to the receiving person's intent, chaplains should verify that the person is desirous of spiritual counseling or guidance before engaging in such discussion.
- D. Chaplains may not accept gratuities for any service or any subsequent actions or follow-up contacts that were provided while functioning as a chaplain for the San Bernardino County Probation Department.

VII. Compliance

- A. Chaplains are volunteer members of this department, and except as otherwise specified within this procedure, are required to comply with the Volunteer Program Policy and other applicable policies.

VIII. Operational Guidelines

- A. Generally, each chaplain will serve with San Bernardino County Probation Department personnel a minimum of four hours per month.
- B. Chaplains shall be permitted to ride with officers during any shift and observe San Bernardino County Probation Department operations, provided the Watch Commander has been notified and has approved the activity.
- C. Chaplains shall not be evaluators of members of the Department.

San Bernardino County Probation Department

MANUAL

Chaplains

- D. In responding to incidents, a chaplain shall never function as an officer.
- E. When accompanying officers in the field, chaplains may be required to stand-by in a secure area until the situation has been deemed safe by the officers.
- F. Chaplains shall serve only within the jurisdiction of the San Bernardino County Probation Department unless otherwise authorized by the CPO or the authorized designee.
- G. Each chaplain shall ensure information is confidential except in circumstances where disclosure is required by law or policy.

IX. Assisting the Department

- A. The responsibilities of a chaplain related to this department include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Assisting members in the diffusion of a conflict or incident, when requested.
 - 2. Responding to natural and accidental deaths, suicides and attempted suicides, family disturbances, and any other incident that in the judgment of the Watch Commander or supervisor aids in accomplishing the mission of the Department.
 - 3. Responding to all major disasters, such as natural disasters, bombings and similar critical incidents.
 - 4. Being on-call and, if possible, on-duty during major demonstrations or any public function that requires the presence of a large number of department members.
 - 5. Attending department and academy graduations, ceremonies and social events, and offering invocations and benedictions, as requested.
 - 6. Participating in in-service training classes.
 - 7. Willingness to train others to enhance the effectiveness of the Department.

X. Assisting the Community

- A. The duties of a chaplain related to the community include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Fostering familiarity with the role of law enforcement in the community.
 - 2. Providing an additional link between the community, other chaplain coordinators, and the Department.
 - 3. Providing liaison with various civic, business, and religious organizations.
 - 4. Promptly facilitating requests for representatives or leaders of various denominations.
 - 5. Assisting the community in any other function as needed or requested.
 - 6. Making referrals in cases where specialized attention is needed or in cases that are beyond the chaplain's ability to assist.

San Bernardino County Probation Department

MANUAL

Chaplains

XI. Chaplain Meetings

- A. All chaplains are required to attend scheduled meetings, if applicable. Any absences must be satisfactorily explained to the chaplain/volunteer coordinator.

XII. Assisting Department Members

- A. The responsibilities of a chaplain related to department members include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Assisting in making notification to families of members who have been seriously injured or killed and, after notification, responding to the hospital or home of the member.
 - 2. Visiting sick or injured members in the hospital or at home.
 - 3. Attending and participating, when requested, in funerals of active or retired members.
 - 4. Serving as a resource for members when dealing with the public in incidents, such as accidental deaths, suicides, suicidal subjects, serious accidents, drug and alcohol abuse, and other such situations that may arise.
 - 5. Providing counseling and support for members and their families.
 - 6. Being alert to the needs of members and their families.

XIII. Privileged Communication

- A. No person who provides chaplain services to members of the Department may work or volunteer for the San Bernardino County Probation Department in any capacity other than that of chaplain.
- B. Department chaplains shall be familiar with state evidentiary laws and rules pertaining to the limits of the clergy-penitent, psychotherapist-patient and other potentially applicable privileges and shall inform members when it appears reasonably likely that the member is discussing matters that are not subject to privileged communications. In such cases, the chaplain should consider referring the member to a non-department counseling resource.
- C. No chaplain shall provide counsel to or receive confidential communications from any San Bernardino County Probation Department member concerning an incident personally witnessed by the chaplain or concerning an incident involving the chaplain.

XIV. Training

- A. The Department will establish a minimum number of training hours and standards for department chaplains. The training, as approved by the Training Supervisor and/or Volunteer Coordinator, may include:
 - 1. Stress management
 - 2. Death notifications
 - 3. Symptoms of post-traumatic stress

San Bernardino County Probation Department

MANUAL

Chaplains

4. Burnout for members of law enforcement and chaplain
5. Legal liability and confidentiality
6. Ethics
7. Responding to crisis situation
8. The law enforcement family
9. Substance abuse
10. Suicide
11. Officer injury or death
12. Sensitivity and diversity