Chaplains should have, as a minimum, these qualifications:

- A degree from an accredited college or university
- An advanced degree in counseling and/or theology
- An endorsement by the denomination
- Five years of ministry experience or the equivalent

Training Chaplains

Although chaplains use basic pastoral skills in performing their duties, they must undergo training to function comfortably in the unique settings of law enforcement agencies.

Agencies will assist chaplains in developing and implementing effective programs.

Content of the training should include:

- Structure and organization of the agency
- The chaplain's role in crisis situations
- The counseling of officers involved in shooting incidents

CRIMINAL

JUSTICE

MINISTRY

EDDIE K. COAST
Coordinator
3800 N. May
OKC, OK. 73112
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Jail and Prison Ministry

County jails are where public offenders are first confined and where they feel the impact of their situation. They have been defeated. They feel helpless and hopeless. A chaplain can perform a valid and effective ministry to these offenders if the volunteers are carefully selected and if officials cooperate and support their efforts.

To determine if there is a need in the jail, contact the Captain or jail administrator. If you want to volunteer in a prison, the chaplain should be contacted at the prison and if there is not a chaplain, the volunteer coordinator should be contacted.

Volunteers should have a deep concern for individuals. Inmates detect insincerity quickly; thus the motive of volunteers should be genuine.

Law Enforcement Chaplaincy

A law enforcement chaplain has a wide range of ministries including:
- Counseling
- Ministering to injured or sick officers and families
- Conducting funerals
- Performing weddings
- Counseling victims of crimes
- Assisting officers in crisis situations (suicide attempts, domestic quarrels, sexual assaults)
- Making death notifications
- Participating in agency graduations and honor ceremonies
- Teaching ethics and moral issues classes in training programs
- Serving as liaison between the agency and the community

The diversity of ministries is usually greater than that of the traditional congregation.

Recruiting Chaplains

Chaplains should possess both ministry skills and a willingness to serve.

The success of chaplaincy ministries will be in direct proportion to the commitment of the chaplains.

Guidelines for volunteers

All persons entering the jail are subject to **search.**

- Volunteers are to dress in appropriate attire. No shorts or provocative clothing are permitted. Shoes must be worn.
- Nothing is to be taken into the jail, and left with an inmate.
- Never carry any letters or messages into or out of the jail.
- Follow all directions or instructions given by the officer on duty. Never interfere with their performance of duty.
- Volunteers will maintain confidentiality of information concerning inmates except in the following circumstances:
1. When it would endanger the staff or operation of the facility.
2. When it would endanger other inmates or the inmate himself.
3. When it would endanger the physical plant.

The activities listed below are strictly prohibited.

- Trading personal possessions or exchanging anything of value with an inmate.

Selling any product or personal possession to an inmate.

- Making a gift or promise of a gift or accepting a gift either directly or indirectly from an inmate.
- Engaging in sexual contact of any type with an inmate.

Do's and don'ts

- **Do be yourself.**
- Mean what you say, never make a promise, which you do not or cannot keep?
- Be supportive, encouraging, and friendly, but firm.
- Be patient, the positive effects of your relationship with the inmate may not have a decisive effect until long after you have stopped working with him/her.
- With respect to yourself. Do not be manipulated. If an inmate asks you to do something which you consider "borderline" tell him/her you will check to see if it is okay. Then ask the appropriate official.
- **Don't expect thanks.**