

<b>GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</b> <b>Standard Operating Procedures</b>		
<b>Policy Name:</b> Faith and Character Based Initiatives		
<b>Policy Number:</b> 503.01	<b>Effective Date:</b> 08/04/15	<b>Page Number</b> 1 of 12
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I. Introduction and Summary:

The Georgia Department of Corrections has established Faith and Character-Based Initiatives to meet the needs of our offenders, their families, and their communities, by involving community stakeholders using a holistic approach to enhance opportunities for offenders to experience personal growth and development. Faith and Character-Based Initiatives provide an environment for change through the promotion of personal responsibility, integrity, accountability, and the building of one’s faith and character. Offenders have an opportunity to experience instruction, individual and group counseling, and mentoring provided by a combination of GDC staff, other state agencies, peer mentors and community volunteers.

II. Authority:

GDC-SOPs: Classification Committee – 220.03 (IIC02-0004); Facility List of Correctional Associates – 109.02 (VF01-0002); Local Management of Volunteer Services – 109.01 (VF01-0001); Offender Discipline – 209.01 (IIB02-0001); Chaplaincy Services/Purposes -106.01 (VA01-0001); Chaplaincy Services/Objectives – 106.02 (VA01-0002); Chaplaincy Services/Facility And Center Administration LOPs – 106.03 (VA01-0003); Chaplaincy Services/Services – 106.04 (VA01-0004); Chaplaincy Services/New Inmate Orientation – 106.05 (VA01-0005); Chaplaincy Services/Professional Development – 106.06 (VA01-0006); Chaplaincy Services/Chaplaincy Report – 106.07 (VA01-0007); Chaplaincy Services/Islamic (Muslim) Guidelines – 106.8 (VA01-0008); Chaplaincy Services/Marriage Procedures – 106.09 (VA01-0009); Chaplaincy Services/Communion Wine – 106.10 (VA01-0010); Chaplaincy Services/Special Religious Request – 106.11 (VA01-0011); Chaplaincy Services/Wicca (Witchcraft) Guidelines – 106.12 (VA01-0012); Chaplaincy Services/Native American Guidelines – 106.13 (VA01-0013); Duties of a Property Control Coordinator – 402.02 (VB01-0002); Contribution Trust Funds Guidelines – 407.04 (IVI01-0008)

This SOP was originally numbered VK01-0001.

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III. Definitions:

- A. Faith and Character-Based Initiative: A holistic program, secular in nature, designed to equip its participants to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through emphasis on spiritual, moral, and character development and life skills training. The program will meet the needs of the offender population, their families, and their communities that enhance existing programs and involve the community in the reentry efforts of the Department.
- B. Faith and Character-Based Dormitory: A specially designated living unit within a facility that provides a pro-social, programmatic environment for change to those offenders who voluntarily request to participate in the program. This housing unit will foster moral and character development and cultivate pluralistic spiritual enrichment.
- C. Faith and Character-Based Prison: A facility devoted to providing a pro-social, programmatic environment for change to those offenders who voluntarily request to participate in the program. This facility will foster moral and character development and cultivate pluralistic spiritual enrichment.
- D. Certified Correctional Associate: Certified volunteers who have been approved and trained by the Department to assist in the delivery of programs and services to the Faith and Character-Based Program.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM:

- 1. Each designated facility will have a Faith and Character-Based Dormitory which will house offenders who have volunteered to participate in the program.
  - a. It is recommended that the dorm be a closed dorm environment whenever possible.

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- b. Offenders selected are housed together, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for completion of the 12-month dormitory program.
  2. The designated Faith and Character based facility will also house offenders who have volunteered for the program.
    - a. The program will be 24 months in length.
    - b. Offenders applying for the program must meet the requirements of the prison housing the program to include mental health and medical status.
- B. Participation in the program will not be a disruption to the daily operation of the facility, will not interfere with regularly assigned work/program activities and will not disrupt the core mission of the facility.
- C. Offenders must fill out an application and go through the approval process for selection into the program. An offender will not be coerced in any manner to participate in the program. It is purely voluntary.
  1. 12 month dormitory program.
    - a. Applications will be made available in areas designated by the facility to include counseling, chaplaincy, and officer workstations.
    - b. Interested offenders will submit an application to the Chaplain (and) or Counselor for placement consideration.
    - c. Applicants will read and sign the “Offender Contract” and “Dormitory Rules” during the interview and staff recommendation will be forwarded to the Classification Committee for review and assignment. Race, age, religion or sex will not be factors in the approval process. Priority should be given to inmates who have the earliest maximum release dates or TPMs.
    - d. Classification Committee will assign selected offenders to the Faith and Character-Based Dormitory (SCRIBE entry required at this point).
  2. 24 month facility program.

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- a. Interested offenders will submit a handwritten request to the Chaplain or Counselor for placement consideration.
  - b. An application will be submitted for review and approval by the institutional classification committee. Applicants will read and sign the “Offender Contract” and “Program Rules” during interview and the staff recommendation will be forwarded to the Classification Committee for review and assignment. Race, age, religion or sex will not be factors in the approval process. Priority should be given to inmates who have the earliest maximum release dates or TPMs.
  - c. Approved applications will be sent electronically, by fax or mail to the designated Reentry Staff member who then forwards the application to the Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment of the facility, who then will forward the application to Offender Administration.
- D. Offenders participating in the Faith and Character Based Program should meet certain selection criteria to be placed in the dorm.
1. Offender must volunteer for the program. An offender should not be placed in the program as any sort of sanction or because a staff member determines the offender is “in need” of a program of this nature.
  2. It is recommended that offender be DR free for 180 days. However, each offender should be assessed on an individual basis.
  3. Offender must have demonstrated a willingness to participate in self-help programs and activities.
  4. For the dormitory program, offenders must have a minimum of 12 months remaining on his/her sentence at the point that they are projected to start Phase One. For the facility programs, they must have a minimum of 24 months left on their sentence. Consideration for the facility program for those offenders under 24 months will be made on an individual basis.
  5. Offender must meet the requirements for living in general population. For the prison Faith and Character based program, the facility housing the dorm’s living requirements will apply.

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If offenders do not meet the recommended criteria, the Warden should strongly consider the recommendation made by the chaplain/ counselor or other staff to approve the applicant for program participation and review by classification committee. The Warden will make the final decision.

- E. An offender may be removed from the program either voluntarily or involuntarily and the removal is done through a classification action.
  1. Voluntary termination at offender's request must be in writing and signed by the offender. This documentation will be noted in SCRIBE and the signed request will be placed in the file. There will be no negative sanctions for a voluntary request to leave the program.
  2. An involuntary termination may occur due to a lack of progress toward program goals or consistent violation of rules/procedures.
  3. All requests for removal from the program will be processed through the classification committee. The decision to remove an inmate from the program will be a collaborative decision of the counselor, chaplain and security staff. The Warden will make the final decision.
    - a. Disciplinary action may be cause for dismissal but removal from the program is *not* a disciplinary sanction.
    - b. Decision to remove offender from the program by the Warden or designee will result in the offender being reassigned to another living unit or facility.
  4. The offender may reapply, after voluntary or involuntary dismissal, after maintaining a clear record for 6 months or a time period designated by facility.
  5. Medical or Out To Court status that exceeds 30 days will result in an offender being temporarily removed from the program. The offender will be eligible to be reassigned at the start of the next scheduled Phase after returning to the facility or becoming cleared medically.
  6. Dismissal code is to be entered in SCRIBE by Operations Analyst.

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- F. The Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment is ultimately responsible for the implementation and operation of the Faith and Character Based dormitory.
1. The counselor(s) will manage the dormitory program. This position is a counselor or a staff member acting in that role. Within the facility, the counselors will be an integral part of the daily operations of the program.
    - a. The counselor(s) will coordinate volunteer recruitment with Chaplain or volunteer coordinator.
    - b. They will conduct Faith and Character-Based program applicants' interview and orientation.
    - c. They will review the assessment and develop an individual case plan for each participant during Phase One.
    - d. The counselor(s) will conduct individual and group counseling sessions as determined by program components.
    - e. They will submit documentation to Classification Committee for possible dismissal from the Faith and Character-Based Program.
    - f. They will provide case management to all program participants.
    - g. It is recommended that the counselor assigned to the Faith-Character Based Dorm should only carry the Faith and Character Based Dorm participants on their caseload. If not, it is recommended this counselor assist with groups and programming. If the dormitory program has fewer than 100 participants, the counselor may carry other inmates on the caseload to reach 100. Case management documentation will follow the guidelines of current counseling criteria.
  2. The Chaplain will assist in the management of the Faith and Character Based program.
    - a. The Chaplain will be responsible for recruiting and training volunteers.
    - b. The Chaplain will ensure that faith and spiritual needs of the program are being addressed in a non-denominational, pluralistic, multi-faith and inter-faith, manner. The Chaplain will ensure no preference will be given to

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one denomination and offenders have the ability to practice their chosen faith in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

- c. The Chaplain(s) will coordinate/lead cultural and faith diversity classes. A variety of faith/diversity classes will be offered. The Chaplain will ensure with all staff that the programs in faith are not evangelical in any manner and are only for educational purposes.
  - d. They will facilitate “Confronting Self” groups, as needed.
  - e. They will coordinate volunteers to teach faith diversity and character classes.
  - f. They will assist in the coordination and monitoring of the Aftercare Component of the program.
3. Certified Correctional Associate (Volunteers) will assist with the delivery of programs and will conduct approved activities in the Faith and Character-Based Program. Volunteer participation is very important to the program and should be recruited from a variety of skills and expertise.
  4. Correctional Officers will be specially trained to support the basic principles of the initiative. It is recommended that this be a designated post assignment. Within the prison program, all staff will receive this training.
  5. The Warden is ultimately responsible to ensure that the Faith and Character-Based Initiative be a part of the facility mission and that an institutional team concept will be supported throughout the institution to enhance success in reducing recidivism and manage offenders.
- G. The Faith and Character-Based dormitory program, for male institutions, is a 4 phase, 12-month program. Each phase lasts 3 months.
- H. The prison program is a 4-phase, 24 month program with each phase lasting 6 months. The prison has the option to keep the offender within the program for mentoring and to participate in a graduation phase.
- I. The Faith and Character Based Initiatives are structured as follows:
1. The program will consist of 8 major components. These components are: 1) Faith Enrichment, 2) Character Building, 3) Career Planning and Workforce Development, 4) Academic Education, 5) Leisure Skills, 6) Substance Abuse,

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7) Cognitive Behavioral Programming, and 8) Community Service and Family Relationships. These components will be divided in to 4 Phases.

a. Phase I is the Foundational Phase. Offenders will be assessed to determine criminogenic risk and need in the 8 component areas.

- 1) The offender will participate in programming as noted in their GDC assessment.
- 2) Selective Service, social security and birth certificate applications will be reviewed and completed as needed.
- 3) Educational programming will begin in a variety of faith-based issues and topics.
- 4) Areas of character development are explored through a variety of means such as journals, groups and role-play.
- 5) It is recommended that Motivation for Change (M4C) be given to all members entering this program. This is a program about change and will give the inmate the ability to process the change of spiritual discovery and growth.
- 6) All programming the offender is currently enrolled in will continue.

b. Phase II is the Discovery Phase of the Program. Offenders will explore their strengths and weaknesses and begin scheduled programming as identified by assessment.

- 1) Cognitive interventions will begin. An offender will only be placed in cognitive based programming if recognized as being needed on the assessment. Thinking for a Change, Detours and/or MRT may be used.
- 2) Those offenders assessed with a need for further substance abuse programming will begin at this phase.
- 3) Education, detail and other programs will continue.



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- c. Phase III is the Transformation Phase and the offender should begin to exhibit signs of change in many aspects of their lives. Participation in all programs from the Discovery Phase will continue.
- 1) Offenders referred to “Confronting the Self” group will begin.
  - 2) Career Exploration will increase and the Interest Profiler will be administered. The offender will participate in the career center and receive training on job related skills. All offenders in this phase should develop an active resume based on the Interest Profiler and Job Development Plan. These should all be copied by the counselor and placed in the offenders’ TOPPSTEP folder. It is strongly recommended that the information be saved on computer means to give to also be given to the offender upon release. The FCBD Career Center should have a minimum of one computer as part of the dorm career center.
  - 3) A community service project will begin.
- d. Phase IV is the Transition Phase where the offenders learn to apply lessons learned with the program to their community either on the outside or in the facility.
- 1) Offenders in this phase will begin peer facilitation, working with the earlier phases of the program. Offenders may also be later kept in the program as facilitators actually they graduate from the program.
  - 2) The attached transition plan is created.
  - 3) The offender will continue programs from other phases.
  - 4) The offender will complete Faith and Character-Based program evaluation.
- e. The Graduate Phase: This after-care component lasts 6 months and will allow the participant the ability to develop individual release plans while assisting others within the Faith and Character Base Program.

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- 1) Mentoring: Individual participants will be paired with mentors to establish positive contacts for release.
  - 2) Reentry Skills Building Program: The participant will continue with the program and use the skills learned to assist with the program.
  - 3) Peer Support: The participant will engage in active peer support of the Faith and Character Based Program.
- f. For Women’s Facilities, all components remain the same but the program will be run open-ended due to the high discharge rate of female offenders. The program coordinator will coordinate gender specific programs.
  - g. The facility program should refer to the Local Operating Procedure for Phase outline.
  - h. All Faith and Character-Based program graduates should participate in a formalized graduation ceremony. These graduations will be a minimum of 2 times a year. Family may be invited and food may be part of the ceremony. It is recommended that these graduations not be with other program graduations due to the components of the program. It is important that non-graduating members be part of the graduation ceremony. If the graduation is combined, a separate celebration should be planned for the Faith and Character Based program only. Each graduate should be given a certificate of graduation.
  - i. Family Days will also be conducted in each program. These programs may be part of graduation but are recommended to be separate events.
  - j. For the dormitory program, the graduates will be placed back in general population. For the facility program, the offender will be transferred to a facility that best suits their case plan or will continue in a mentoring capacity at the prison. The mission of the graduates is to go in to the general population and work with General Population inmates. It is recommended that the graduates be placed in dorms in groups. Graduates should meet a minimum of once a quarter, but recommended to meet once a month to enhance the lessons learned throughout the program. These meetings should be used for continued community development and discussion of future goals and projects for the graduates.

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- k. Mentors may be chosen from each graduating class to assist in a variety of tasks such as continued work within the Faith and Character Based Program, work with Chaplaincy, and assistance in individual dorm settings in areas such as education and character development.
- l. The 24 month Faith and Character Based Dorm programs will have each phase last for a 6 month period. All other guidelines outlined in this SOP will apply.
- m. The use of donations is a key component within the Faith and Character Program. Guidelines outlined in policy IVI01-0008 must be followed.
  - a. All donations must be used for the good of the program and not for an individual within the program
  - b. A log needs to be maintained for all items bought for the program.
  - c. Gift cards are preferred over cash donations but all receipts must be kept and purchases logged.
  - d. Reloadable “credit cards” are not permissible.
  - e. Families of the offender may contribute to the program, but it must be used for the program and not the individual family member.
  - f. The Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment is responsible to assure that the items purchased with the donations follow all guidelines.

V. Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Offender Application for Dorm
- Attachment 2: Offender Contract for Program
- Attachment 3: Program Rules
- Attachment 4: Volunteer Contract
- Attachment 5: Faith and Character Based Prison Application

Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

If there is a specific form that must be completed pursuant to this policy, then list the form’s retention schedule and disposition here and at the top of the form. Contact

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Terrie Langlois in Risk Management (478-992-5962/langlt04@dcor.state.ga.us) to confirm the retention schedule when creating or reviewing this policy.