

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

NUMBER: 147

SUBJECT: Religion Policy

ACA STANDARDS: None

DIRECTOR: Herbert Bernsen

EFFECTIVE DATE: 7/03 REVISION DATE: 11/13



I. POLICY

The St. Louis County Department of Justice Services shall establish guidelines concerning religious expression by staff in the workplace.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

All St. Louis County Department of Justice Services' staff are responsible for the following procedures.

III. DEFINITIONS

Establishment Clause: A Constitutional prohibition on government entities acting with the purpose or effect of advancing or inhibiting religion.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. St. Louis County Government is a public entity bound by the Establishment Clause and the concept of separation of church and state. Inmates in the St. Louis County Jail and the general public should never receive the impression that St. Louis County Government or a St. Louis County Government employee is endorsing or criticizing a particular religion.

B. A significant factor in upholding governmental programs in the face

of Establishment Clause attack is their neutrality towards religion. The guarantee of neutrality is respected, not offended, when the government, following neutral criteria and evenhanded policies, extends benefits to recipients whose ideologies and viewpoints, including religious ones, are broad and diverse.

- C. Religious expressions made by staff whether orally or written will be general in nature and not advocating or criticizing a particular religion.
- D. Inmate requests for general discussion with staff on or about a religion will be brief and not go beyond job responsibilities and duties. These inmates requests will be referred to the Volunteer Coordinator so an appropriate religious counselor can be assigned to the inmate.
- E. The Volunteer Coordinator will meet individually with an inmate who requests information or counseling in a specific religion. He/she will make every effort to arrange for the inmate to meet with a religious volunteer of the requested religion.
- F. All inmate requests for religious material and/or religious counseling will be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- G. Staff working with inmates will adhere to the following:
 - 1. All materials presented to the inmates having any religious connotation will be generic in nature. (Example: “God” as you understand him to be; “higher power”) Materials will never suggest a specific faith.
 - 2. Discussions, questions and staff opinions about specific religious beliefs will be kept to a minimum and will not interfere with the scope of job duties and/or allow for others to be placed in a situation where the discussion could become uncomfortable. Refer inmates to the Volunteer Coordinator for in depth discussions or requests.
 - 3. Staff will not distribute literature or make reference to any scriptures and/or religious quotes in any interaction with inmates.
 - 4. Praying with the inmates in a group setting or individually is not allowed.
 - 5. The teaching/selling of a particular religion will never be done and

inmates will be encouraged to choose their own faith, if they so choose.

- H. Program Specialists who work in the Choices Program which is based on the twelve (12) Steps, will refer to “God as you understand him.” Staff working in this program will encourage inmates to choose their own higher power and a specific religion, if they so choose.
- I. Religious materials will be kept in a private office or area and will not be introduced to common areas where the inmates and the public may receive the impression that the St. Louis County Government is sponsoring or endorsing a particular religion.

[To add a link bar to this page, you must first save it to a Web server that is running the FrontPage Server Extensions 2002 or SharePoint Team Services from Microsoft.] [Click](#)