

Background Check Resources (updated on September 1, 2018)

All persons or organizations conducting background checks must comply with the terms of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), which include specific procedures and notifications that must be followed both before conducting the background check, and again if a negative decision regarding a person is made based on information that is discovered through the process. Consult with your provider before conducting any background checks to determine how to comply with the FCRA.

Why do we need to do background checks?

Background checks reduce the risk of abuse and misbehavior in our churches. See ¶13084 in the 2012 Book of Resolutions for our denominational mandate.

Who should be screened with a background check?

The standard practice is to screen all paid staff, and also unpaid staff/volunteers who work with minors and vulnerable adults. You must conduct a screening yourself. It is not adequate to accept that an applicant has completed a background check with their employer or through another volunteer agency.

What should be included in the screening?

The standard practice is to complete a national background check. It is no longer adequate to complete a state or county screening. All background checks should include:

- Social Security number verification
- National criminal background check
- National sex offender registry check

If a person's duties include these areas, you might also include:

- Credit report (for those with financial responsibilities)
- Driving record (for those providing transportation on behalf of the church)

What company should we work with to do these screenings?

There are many companies that can provide a national background check. Our conference does not endorse any particular provider of screening.

- The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries and Volunteers in Mission use *Trak-1* to complete background checks. <https://trak-1.com/>
- The Board of Ordained Ministry uses *Trusted Employees*, the company endorsed by our conference insurance provider, Church Mutual. <https://www.churchmutual.com/109/Background-Screening>

When should we do this screening?

A background check should be completed and cleared prior to the beginning of employment or volunteering. A check should be repeated on a regular schedule. Church Mutual recommends repeating the screening process annually. Your Safe Sanctuaries policy should state your schedule for ongoing screening.

What about personal references?

Background checks are the industry standard and cannot be ignored. They do have limits, so adding references to your screening process is a good idea. A background check cannot predict future behavior, and it can only report to you what is officially on record. Most checks require a social security number, so persons without a number cannot be adequately screened. Any court records for minors are sealed, and thus are not visible on background checks. When seeking personal references, ensure that references are neither related to the applicant nor living in the same household with the applicant. References should be able to speak to both a general assessment of character and an ability to complete duties in the area where work will take place.