



Safe Church, Safe Communities

Public Records Checks for Individuals

Working with Children or Youth

In the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, Public Records Checks (“clearances”) are mandatory for all clergy, employees, vestry members, volunteers whose work for the church involves children or youth, and certain individuals with keys or access to locked spaces. The scope of, and rationale for, this policy is outlined in the Diocese’s *Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth* (Section IV).

The following clearances must be completed before an individual may begin working with children or youth and must be renewed every five years thereafter.

- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal Background Check*

* NOTES:

(1) Any individual who is either employed by the church or has lived in Pennsylvania for fewer than 10 years must obtain an FBI check. A volunteer who has lived in Pennsylvania for the past ten years or more may instead affirm a ten-year Pennsylvania residency by signing a Disclosure Statement for Volunteers. For details, see the link provided at the bottom of the following page: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Clearances/Pages/default.aspx>.

(2) FBI checks require fingerprinting, a process for which an appointment must be requested.

In addition, a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records check is required for employees and volunteers who will transport children or youth as part of, or an extension of, a ministry of the church or for a church-sponsored event.

The individual seeking a role in ministry with children and youth will be responsible for any fees charged for public records checks, but a congregation or other organization may adopt a policy of reimbursing those costs.

Obtaining a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance[†]

A Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance can be obtained through an [online portal](#) or by [submitting a paper form](#) to:

ChildLine and Abuse Registry
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
PO Box 8170
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170

Obtaining a Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check[†]

A Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check can be obtained through an [online portal](#) or by submitting either a [paper form for employees and clergy](#) or a [paper form for volunteers](#) (as appropriate) to:

Pennsylvania State Police
Central Repository – 164
1800 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9758

[†]*NOTE: Clergy and lay employees cannot register for these clearances and background checks as volunteers. Anyone who receives a salary or stipend is considered an employee.*

Obtaining an FBI Criminal Background Check

An FBI Criminal Background Check can be obtained by visiting the [IdentoGO website](#) and entering one of the following service codes:

For clergy and lay employees: 1KG756

For vestry members and all other volunteers: 1KG6ZJ

At that site, it is possible to schedule an appointment at a nearby fingerprinting site. The site also lists the documents needed to facilitate processing.

Obtaining a DMV Records Check

A Pennsylvania Driving Record can be obtained by visiting the [PennDot online services website](#) and requesting a full driver's history. Requests can also be submitted by mail using a [Request for Driver Information \(Form DL-503\)](#). Mail forms to:

Bureau of Driver Licensing
Driver Record Services
P.O. Box 68695
Harrisburg, PA 17106-8695

Records

Each individual's Public Records Check documentation must be kept in a secure location as follows:

For Clergy: Copies of each check must be submitted to the Diocesan Office. Copies may be sent as attachments to Executive Assistant Andrea Rath at arath@episcopalpgh.org.

For Lay Employees, Vestry Members, and all others

Copies of each check must be submitted to the relevant parish or organization.

You are advised to keep copies for your own records.

Findings

Note that diocesan policy provides that “whenever a check surfaces questions about an individual’s suitability for ministry with children or youth, she or he shall be accorded an opportunity to discuss those questions and correct any misinformation.”

*If you have any questions or run into any issues, please contact Andrea Rath at
arath@episcopalpgh.org.*