

# DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN

## Background Check Requirements

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Who needs certifications?

Criminal background checks are required for all Diocesan, Parish and School employees.

Persons 14 years of age to 17 years of age (not yet 18 years of age) that are **employees** (receive pay or a stipend) are required to complete criminal background checks. Persons 14 years of age to 17 years of age (not yet 18 years of age) who are **volunteers** do not require any background checks.

Criminal background checks are required for all volunteers of a child care service, school or a program, activity or service responsible for a child's welfare, or volunteers having direct contact with children, such as:

- CCD/PREP Directors, Coordinators and Teachers
- CYO Coaches, Assistant Coaches and parent supervisors
- Day Care, Pre-school & Extended Care Staff
- Coordinators of Youth Ministry and volunteer staff
- Boy Scout Leaders and Staff
- School Cafeteria Volunteers
- School & Teacher Assistants (including parent chaperones for school activities)
- Knights of Columbus Squires Recruiters & youth Program Leaders

NOTE: The above list is NOT inclusive of all volunteers. Please follow the following guidance to determine if a volunteer is required to obtain certifications:

- In order to determine who in your organization is required to obtain certifications as a condition of volunteering with children, you must first confirm that the applicant is an adult, as only adult volunteers are required to obtain certifications.
- You should then carefully consider whether the volunteer is responsible for the welfare of a child or has direct volunteer contact with children.
- When determining whether a volunteer is responsible for the welfare of a child consider whether the volunteer is acting in lieu of or on behalf of a parent. If they are acting in lieu of or on behalf of a parent, they will need certifications. If a determination is made that the volunteer is not responsible for the welfare of a child, you then move on to the second avenue for consideration; whether they have direct volunteer contact with children.
- The second avenue for consideration is whether the volunteer has direct volunteer contact with children because they provide care, supervision, guidance or control of children and have routine interaction with children. As the terms care, supervision, guidance or control are not defined in the statute we suggest that the common meaning of these terms be used, with child safety serving as the paramount consideration. If the answer to this question is that they provide care, guidance, supervision or control of children, they need certifications. If, however, you determine they do not provide care, guidance, supervision or control of children, you then must consider whether they have routine interaction with children.
- With regard to routine interaction with children, consideration should be given to what the volunteer's role is within the organization. Is their contact with children regular and repeated contact that is integral to their volunteer responsibilities?

- If you determine they do have direct contact with children, they need certifications. If, however, you determine that they do not have direct contact with children, certifications are not required. Please be sure to consult the Diocese when making these determinations.

**Are there any exceptions to the certification requirements for students who volunteer?**

Yes, students who volunteer are not required to obtain certifications as long as they meet all of the following requirements:

- the individual is currently enrolled in a school;
- the individual is not a person responsible for the child's welfare;
- the individual is volunteering for an event that occurs on school grounds;
- the event is sponsored by the school in which the individual is enrolled as a student; and
- the event is not for children who are in the care of the organization or a child care service.

**What is the definition of child?**

For purposes of certifications, a child is an individual under 18 years of age.

**How is direct volunteer contact with children defined?**

Direct volunteer contact with children is defined in § 6303 (relating to definitions) as the care, supervision, guidance or control of children and routine interaction with children.

**How is routine interaction defined?**

Routine interaction is regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person's employment or volunteer responsibilities.

**Which certifications are needed?**

All prospective employees must obtain the following certifications:

- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check (Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History (PATCH))
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Certificate
- Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Background Fingerprint Check (18+ years old)

All prospective volunteers of a child care service, school or program, activity or service, responsible for a child's welfare or volunteers having direct contact with children:

- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check (Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History (PATCH))
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Certificate
- Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Background Fingerprint Check (18+ years old)

**Are there requirements for volunteers to obtain a free Child Abuse and PSP certification?**

Yes. In order for the fee to be waived for the Child Abuse and PSP certifications the following conditions must be met:

- (1) The certifications are required as a condition to volunteer.
- (2) The certifications may not be used for employment or any other purpose.
- (3) The certifications shall only be provided free of charge to a volunteer once every 57 months.
- (4) The volunteer swears or affirms, in writing, under penalty of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities), the following:
  - [i] The certifications are required as a condition to volunteer.
  - [ii] The volunteer has not received background certifications free of charge within the previous 57 months.
  - [iii] The volunteer understands that the certifications shall not be valid or used for any other purpose.

**I am a new volunteer. When do I need to request a child abuse history certification?**

Beginning August 25, 2015, all new volunteers must submit certifications prior to the commencement of service.

**How often do I need to renew my certifications?**

Beginning August 25, 2015, all volunteers will be required to obtain certifications every 60 months.

If an individual or agency, however, elects to renew all certifications at the same time, the date of the oldest certification, rather than the most recent, is the date to be used for the renewal date.

**How much do the certifications cost?**Beginning August 25, 2015:

The PSP criminal history certification costs \$0 for volunteers and \$22.00 for employees

The Child Abuse certification costs \$0 for volunteers and \$8.00 for employees

The FBI federal criminal history certification costs \$22.00 through DHS and PDE

**As an employee, how do I obtain my Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal History certification?**

The employee will complete the Diocese of Allentown Background Check Authorization form, provide it to the Local Safe Environment Coordinator and obtain instructions with a payment code to register to have their fingerprints scanned. The instructions will provide information on where to register online and how to set up an appointment to have fingerprints scanned at a public site.

**As a school employee, how do I obtain my Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal History certification?**

Prior to hire, all persons applying for employment in a Diocesan school must pay for and provide, at their interview for a school employment position, an original Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check certificate, Pennsylvania Child Abuse History certificate and the receipt and registration ID number provided by Identogo when they scanned their fingerprint. The person applying for employment must already have registered for and scanned their fingerprints prior to the interview. The two certificates and the registration ID must be less than one-year old at the time of hire.

For rechecks, the school employee will complete the Diocese of Allentown Background Check Authorization form, and receive instructions from the Local Safe Environment Coordinator to obtain fingerprints with a payment code. Upon registering online, the school employee will set up an appointment to have their fingerprints scanned at a local site.

**As a volunteer, how do I obtain my Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal History certification?**

The volunteer will complete the Diocese of Allentown Background Check Authorization form, and receive instructions from the Local Safe Environment Coordinator to obtain fingerprints with a payment code. Upon registering online, the volunteer will set up an appointment to have their fingerprints scanned at a local site.

**As an employee, how do I obtain my Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance certification?**

The employee will obtain the online instructions from the Local Safe Environment Coordinator with a payment code. Upon completion of the online application, the employee will receive an email when the report is complete then will have to log into the website to download the certificate.

**As a school employee, how do I obtain my Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance certification?**

Prior to hire, all persons applying for employment in a Diocesan school must pay for and provide, at their interview for a school employment position, an original Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check certificate, Pennsylvania Child Abuse History certificate and the receipt and registration ID number provided

by IdentoGo when they scanned their fingerprint. The two certificates and the registration ID must be less than one-year old at the time of hire.

For rechecks, The school employee will obtain the online instructions from the Local Safe Environment Coordinator with a payment code. Upon completion of the online application, the school employee will receive an email when the report is complete then will have to log into the website to download the certificate. We may use paper applications as a possibility for the rechecks but this will be determined then.

**As a volunteer, how do I obtain my Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance certifications?**

The volunteer will obtain the online instructions from the Local Safe Environment Coordinator. No payment code is required as a volunteer may obtain this clearance for free once every 57 months. The volunteer will receive an email when the report is complete then will have to log into the website to download the certificate.

**If I have paid for the background checks for other employment, may I submit them as opposed to re-doing the process?**

Yes, please submit the originals to the local safe environment coordinator to copy.

For employment, each of the three checks must be less than a year old.

To volunteer, each of the three checks, must be less than 57 months old.