

Overview of Requirements of Pennsylvania and Canon Law

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires all active clergy (including supply), lay employees, vestry members, and volunteers to obtain clearances in order to continue their positions. The law also requires that employees and volunteers be considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. All current clergy and employees must be in compliance with these policies, and clearances need to be renewed every 60 months.

In addition to Pennsylvania law, all active clergy (including supply), lay employees, vestry members, volunteers, and key holders, and teenage assistants (14-17 years) in the Diocese of Bethlehem must complete Safe Church Trainings. These trainings must be renewed every 36 months. Safe Church Training is done online. If you do not have an account for Safe Church Training, please send an email to [Paula Lapinski](#) including your name, parish and email address.

In the Diocese of Bethlehem, we are committed to establishing and maintaining safe environments for children in our congregations and church buildings. All parishes are required to adhere to the Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse adopted by Diocesan Council, which are available for download.

[Diocesan Policies](#) (updated June 2022).

Please see the chart on the last page to determine what trainings and clearances you are required to take based on your role in order to be compliant with Pennsylvania and Canon law.

1) Safe Church courses online.

All required modules must be completed on the [Praesidium Academy website](#). Safe Church Training must be completed every 36 months.

If you have not yet registered, please email [Paula Lapinski](#) your name, parish, and email. She will register you with Praesidium Academy and they will send you a welcome email to create your own password. Your username will be your email, so each person needs their own email address.

Please consult the chart below to ensure you are completing the correct modules.

*Please note that items 2-4 must be redone every 60 months in accordance with Pennsylvania law
Background checks cannot be run on minors*

2) Obtain a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance.

This can be done through the [online portal](#) or you can submit a [paper form](#) to:

ChildLine and Abuse Registry

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

PO Box 8170

Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170

Keep in mind that clergy and lay employees cannot register for clearances and background checks as a volunteer. You are considered an employee.

3) Obtain a Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check.

This can be done through the online portal or you can submit a paper form to:

Pennsylvania State Police

Central Repository – 164

1800 Elmerton Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17110-9758

Keep in mind that clergy and lay employees, cannot register for clearances and background checks as a volunteer.

4) Obtain an FBI Criminal Background Check.

Go to the IdentoGO website and enter the service code

For clergy and lay employees: 1KG756

For vestry members and all other volunteers: 1KG6ZJ

You will then be able to schedule an appointment at a fingerprinting site near you and learn what you'll need to bring in order to facilitate processing.

Note for vestry members, volunteers and other unpaid positions: *If you are a continuous resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the last 10 years, you may fill out this form in lieu of obtaining an FBI background check.* This does not apply to clergy or lay employees.

For more information about obtaining child abuse clearances and state/FBI background checks, visit PA's DHS website.

5) Keep documents on file in appropriate location.

Clergy: Copies of your Child Abuse History Clearance, State Police Criminal Records Check, and FBI Criminal Background check must be stored in the diocesan office, as well as a secure location at your parish. You may email copies to Paula Lapinski, or send them via mail to:

Paula Lapinski

The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem

333 Wyandotte Street

Bethlehem, PA 18015

Lay Employees, Vestry Members, and all others: Copies of your Child Abuse History Clearance, State Police Criminal Records Check, and FBI Criminal Background check must be provided and stored in a secure location at your parish.

If you have any questions or run into any issues, please contact Paula.

Safe Church, Safe Communities - Course Selection & Background Check Requirements

R= Required S= Suggested P= Depends on your local Policy Background checks cannot be run on minors.		Introduction & Theological Background	Organizational Rules & Policies	Healthy Boundaries	Power & Relationships	Abuse & Neglect	Inclusion	Pastoral Relationships	Anti-Harassment	Bullying	Reporting	Policies: Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem	PA Child Abuse History Clearance	FBI Criminal Background Check	DMV Records Check**	Application & Interview	Credit Check
Clergy	All Ordained Persons	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R (for check signers)
Children's Ministry Worker or Volunteer	Children's Minister														P		
	Children's Choir Director																
	Sunday School Teacher	R	R	R	S		R		R	R	R	R	R	R		R	
	Nursery Staff or Volunteers																
	Parent Helper														P		
	Youth Volunteers ***														P		
Youth Ministry Worker or Volunteer	Youth Minister											R	R	R	P		
	Youth Choir Director											R	R	R			
	Sunday School Teacher											R	R	R			
	Acolyte Leader	R	R	R	S	R	R	S	R	R	R	R	R	R		R	
	Camp Counselor											R	R	R	P		
	Small Group Leader											R	R	R	P		
	Youth Volunteers ***											R	R	R			
	Confirmation Mentor											R	R	R	P		
Elected Positions	Elected Positions											R	R	R			
	Treasurer											R	R	R			
	Vestry	R	R	R	S	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R			
	Wardens											R	R	R			
	Convention Delegates											R	R	R			
Key Holders	Altar Guild	R	R	R							R	R	R				
	Renters																
Lay Leadership	Eucharistic Visitors														P		
	Small Group Leaders																
	Eucharistic Ministers	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R		R	
	Unpaid Church Staff																R (for check signers)
Other Paid Church Staff	Adult Choir/Music Directors																
	Vergers	R	R	R	S		R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R		R	
	Sextons																
	Administrators																
Other Youth & Children's Ministries	Day Camp staff														P	R	
	VBS Volunteers															R	
	Sleepover Chaperones															R	
	Camp Staff	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	P	R	
	Adult Leaders and Volunteers for Scouting Troops (BSA, GSA, etc.)														P		
School Staff (Preschools, Day Cares, Elementary) These courses are recommended in addition to any trainings required by local regulations.	Administration & Staff															R	
	Teachers, Classroom Aides, & Library Staff															R	
	Chaplains (both lay and ordained)															R	
	Support Staff (Cafeteria staff, bus drivers, custodial, security, etc)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R		R	
	Employees & Volunteers															R	
	Before & After School Care/Program Staff														P	R	
	Parent Volunteers														P		
	Board of Directors																