



Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

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TO: Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and W PA Clergy
Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and W PA Parish Councils

CC: Archbishop MELCHISEDEK

FROM: Archpriest William J. Evansky, Chancellor
Deacon Alexander Cadman, Sexual Abuse Policy Coordinator

DATE: 24 January 2018

SUBJECT: Mandatory Background Checks for all Archdiocesan Clergy, Staff, and Youth Workers

Under the Orthodox Church in America's background check policy the following individuals must be screened through the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh's online system:

- Ordained clergy
- Minor Orders (Subdeacons and Readers)
- Youth Workers (Church School Teachers, camp counselors, youth advisors / mentors, etc.)
- Paid Church employees
- Seminary Applicants
- Diaconal Program Applicants
- Candidates for Ordination
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As such, all priests and deacons of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh with a registered email address have received an invitation from our partnering agency, Verified Volunteers, to complete the process. The email, which comes from **TheAdvocates@verifiedvolunteers.com** with the subject "Invitation from Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania", includes a link to an online application that authorizes monthly scans of governmental watch lists, sex offender registries, and state police criminal databases for each applicant.

Parish priests are also required to send the names and email addresses of any parishioner meeting the above criteria to the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy Coordinator by emailing **policycoordinator@ocadwpa.org** or calling 814-321-4473. He will process them through Verified Volunteers as well. Make every attempt to provide this information in a timely manner.

It is incumbent for every parish priest to ensure that he has completed his background check through the system. (Priests without internet access are required to designate a representative to assist them through the application. The representative will receive a dedicated link for the applicant from the Policy Coordinator upon request.) Clergy not responding to this invitation by March 1 will receive written and/or telephone correspondence from the Policy Coordinator offering his assistance. His Eminence and the Chancellor will be notified of any Archdiocesan clergy not checked through the system as of March 31.

Verified Volunteers provides free, live support to everyone applying through this system. Make a note of their support hotline, 855-326-1860 option 1. Parishes are responsible for the cost of the checks of their clergy, staff, and youth workers. Should financial constraints be an obstacle preventing compliance, please contact the Archdiocese directly.

Those holding Church offices and volunteer positions not listed above are not required to use this Archdiocesan system. However, under the aforementioned OCA background check policy, even though these volunteers are not required to undergo a full background check, they must be checked on the free National Sex Offender Registry (<http://www.nsopw.gov>) by parish administration. These positions include but are not limited to:

- Diocesan Council Member
- Parish Council Member
- Church Officer
- Choir Director
- Altar server (adult and teen)
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Anyone who appears on a sex offender registry cannot hold any position of leadership in the Church.

Questions and comments are welcome and may be directed to the Policy Coordinator using the contact information provided above.