

Dear Children's Ministry / Youth Volunteer,

On December 31, 2014 House Bill No. 435 passed in Pennsylvania pertaining to mandatory background checks on anyone who works directly with children or youth under the age of 18 years old. The bill requires anyone in a position that places them in **regular or routine contact with children (paid or volunteer)** to file both criminal background checks and child abuse clearances. **This law pertains to paid employees and volunteers - there are no exceptions.**

I have attached background information that should answer almost any questions that you may have regarding this process and I have also highlighted a few items of importance below:

- Any adult **over the age of 18** who volunteers with children and youth **under the age of 18** (regular or routine contact) are required to have the background checks noted below.
- The background checks will need to be renewed every 3 years.
- If you are in a position of employment where you already have your background checks (school teacher, daycare worker, law enforcement, etc.), please submit them to Dianne Dell in the Church Office so that our records are in compliance.
- In July 2015 the fees for the backgrounds checks were waived by the State.
- The clearances will be mailed directly to your home and **will need to be submitted to the Church Office (attention to Dianne Dell)** immediately and will be filed in accordance with the law and will be kept confidential. **If you do this on-line you can print the results immediately.**
- All paid employees or volunteers who provide care, supervision, guidance or control, or who have routine interaction with children will be required to have the following clearances:
  - 1) Report of Criminal History from the Pennsylvania State Police; and
  - 2) Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services.**Both of these forms are attached.**

**A fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police IS REQUIRED IF** you have lived outside of the state of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years or if you currently live out of state (i.e.: Maryland, etc.) **The fee is \$27.50 through the Department of Human Services. (This form is also attached for those who live out of state or have not lived in Pennsylvania for the past 10 years.)**

- **Request for Criminal Record Check** – Under the “Purpose of this request,” you will check the “church” box. **You can also go on-line to submit your request using this website:**  
<https://epatch.state.pa.us>

Background checks are a **vital** step to keeping our children and youth safe from any potential harm.

Now, according to the law, we have no choice with regard to background checks, they are mandatory by the State. As you will see on the attached "Fact Sheet" all new volunteers must have background checks in place BEFORE they begin to volunteer. Please keep in mind this is not Bethel's policy, but the policy of the State of Pennsylvania.

I would encourage you to begin to submit your paperwork and move forward as soon as possible as there could be a delay in processing because of the volume of requests at this time.

I would encourage you to contact Dianne Dell (717.359.4675 or [diannedell@bethelag.com](mailto:diannedell@bethelag.com)) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this process. She will be more than happy to assist you.

Thank you so much for your understanding in this process. I would also like to thank you for your love for the Lord and for your service to the ministries at Bethel.

In Christ's love,

Rev. Richard Ritenour  
Lead Pastor

Attachments

RR/ded