



## PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECKS

*Please see separate document for procedures for employee background checks*

This document updates the procedures that were developed to implement the requirements of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (dated 2002, 2005, and 2011) from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the most recent archdiocesan policies regarding ministry-related sexual misconduct and safe environments in ministry, in Clergy Bulletin (Volume XXXIX, Number 1) Strengthening Trust, dated September 18, 2013.

In order to protect those we serve and employ, all volunteers at parishes and schools within the Archdiocese who have either regular, or unsupervised, contact with minors or vulnerable adults must have a background check.

A volunteer's background check should be received, reviewed, and accepted before the volunteer begins his or her service.

### A. GENERAL PROCEDURES:

1. If your location has not done so already, contact The McDowell Agency, Inc. at 651-644-3880 to set up a volunteer sub-account and receive the necessary training, manual and forms to conduct background checks.
2. Indicate in the volunteer position description that a background check is required for the volunteer position. Indicate that volunteer service is dependent on an acceptable background check. An electronic or paper version of a volunteer position description may be obtained by contacting OPCY (Office for the Protection of Children and Youth) staff at [opcy@archspm.org](mailto:opcy@archspm.org) or 651-291-4501. Please give the volunteer applicant a copy of the Archbishop's letter regarding volunteer background checks. An electronic or paper version of this letter may be obtained by contacting OPCY (Office for the Protection of Children and Youth) staff at [opcy@archspm.org](mailto:opcy@archspm.org) or 651-291-4501.
3. **Keep information related to the volunteer background checks in individual files in a secure, locked drawer. Include other information, such as written references and related information, in the same confidential file. As with all such information, these records must be kept confidential and under lock-and-key. The volunteer background check records should only be available to members of the management team who have a specific need for the information.**
4. **The inclusion of the volunteer's Social Security number on FORM 2: VOLUNTEER PRE-SERVICE BACKGROUND SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE AND RELEASE is required by The McDowell Agency in order to validate identity and conduct an accurate search of the records. Once the background search is completed, redact or delete the volunteer's Social Security number information from the forms.**
5. If you have questions about volunteer or employee background checks, please contact the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth staff at [opcy@archspm.org](mailto:opcy@archspm.org) or 651-291-4501.

6. Use only the forms from the Archdiocese Office for the Protection of Children and Youth. **Do not make any changes to the forms except as indicated below.** Ensure that you are using the current version of the background check forms. These are available at [www.archspm.org/departments/opcy/background-checks](http://www.archspm.org/departments/opcy/background-checks) or by calling the OPCY Coordinator at 651-291-4501.

FORM 1	VOLUNTEER APPLICATION AND RELEASE	All Volunteers must complete, sign and return.  Print on your parish/school letterhead, otherwise do not modify.
FORM 2	VOLUNTEER PRE-SERVICE BACKGROUND SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE AND RELEASE	All Volunteers must complete, sign and return.  Print on your parish/school letterhead, otherwise do not modify.
FORM 3	123B.03 INFORMED CONSENT	All Volunteers must complete, sign and return.  Insert your parish/school name as indicated, otherwise do not modify.
FORM 4	TENNESSEN WARNING	All Volunteers must date, sign and return.  <b>Do not modify.</b>
FORM 5	A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT	All Volunteers must receive.  <b>Do not modify.</b>
FORM 6	CONSUMER REPORT/INVESTIGATIVE CONSUMER REPORT DISCLOSURE AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION AUTHORIZATION	All Volunteers must complete, sign and return.  Insert your parish/school name as indicated, otherwise do not modify.
FORM 7	DRIVER'S INFORMATION FORM	Only Volunteers who will drive as part of their job responsibilities must complete, sign and return.  Print on your parish/school letterhead, otherwise do not modify.
FORM 8	BACKGROUND CHECK REPORT SHARING AND PRE-SERVICE APPLICANT RELEASE	Only Volunteers who want their background check information from another Archdiocesan parish/school shared with your parish/school need to complete, sign and return.  Print on your parish/school letterhead, otherwise do not modify.

**NOTE: All applicants must receive a copy of FORM 5: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT and sign a copy of FORM 6: CONSUMER REPORT/INVESTIGATIVE CONSUMER REPORT DISCLOSURE AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION AUTHORIZATION. These forms are required under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act to be reviewed and accepted by anyone submitting to any type of consumer report from a consumer reporting agency. Consumer reports include, but are not limited to, criminal background checks as well as credit reports and driving record reports.**

## B. VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES:

All parish and school volunteers will be background checked using the same volunteer package from The McDowell Agency. All volunteers will be screened using the 123B statutory search through the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), which is required for certain groups under changes in Minnesota law. This 123B statutory search yields certain private data, including all levels of sex offender status, adult convictions, adult arrests less than one year old with no disposition, convictions over 15 years old, and juvenile adjudications.

1. Please refer to the McDowell Agency's "Archdiocese Online Background Check Instructions" for step by step instructions for entering requests online. This document is available on the McDowell Agency's website once you have signed in with your user ID and password.
2. **FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER**  
Request the Volunteer Package from The McDowell Agency. This package includes a 123B statutory search of BCA records, a criminal history check in all counties of residence and employment within the last ten years, a national sex offender registry search, a USA Criminal Index search, and a social security number validation and address trace.
  - a) Have the volunteer read and complete FORMS 1-6, listed above. Keep copies of FORMS 1-6 in the volunteer's confidential background and investigation file.
  - b) Submit the data from FORM 2: VOLUNTEER PRE-SERVICE BACKGROUND SCREENING AND RELEASE using the secure McDowell Agency website.
  - c) Submit FORM 3: 123B.03 INFORMED CONSENT to the McDowell Agency via fax, U.S. mail, or scan and upload as you are submitting the background check (page 9 of the McDowell User Guide). This search takes between 7-10 days.
  - d) Please contact The McDowell Agency directly at 651-644-3880 if you have questions about form submission.
 

www.mcdowellagency.com  
The McDowell Agency  
1101 Snelling Avenue North  
St Paul, MN 55108  
FAX (651) 644-3877
3. **FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO RECENTLY MOVED TO MINNESOTA**  
**Do not accept background check reports from other dioceses or organizations outside the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.** If a volunteer applicant has recently moved to Minnesota, all counties of residence and employment for the past ten years, including those out of state, must be checked.
4. **FOR VOLUNTEERS YOUNGER THAN 18**  
Generally, criminal records are unavailable for those younger than age 18. If the volunteer applicant is younger than age 18, the parish or school must obtain at least two (2) letters of reference in lieu of a background check. These reference letters should be from trustworthy adults (other than the applicant's parents) and at least one should be from the applicant's principal, counselor or a teacher. These written references should attest to the applicant's character, lack of misconduct and dependability for the volunteer service considered. The written references should be kept on file in the same manner as background checks for adult volunteers. (A sample form is available by contacting OPCY at [opcy@archspm.org](mailto:opcy@archspm.org) or 651-291-4501.)

5. **FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MONEY**  
If the volunteer is working in the Finance area or will handle a large amount of money (\$250 or more on a regular basis), request a credit report from The McDowell Agency. (See also FORM 2, authorizing a credit check in those instances.)
6. **FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO DRIVE AS PART OF THEIR SERVICE**  
If the volunteer will drive as part of his or her volunteer duties or will operate organizational vehicles, request a report of the volunteer's driving record from The McDowell Agency. Have the volunteer complete FORM 7: DRIVER'S INFORMATION FORM.
7. **FOR VOLUNTEERS WHOSE SERVICE REQUIRES ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OR PROFESSIONAL LICENSES**  
Verify that the applicant has the necessary academic credentials and/or professional licenses using a source independent of the applicant. Ideally, check with the organization or institution that issued the credentials or licenses. The McDowell Agency may also be used to verify academic credentials or licenses, for an additional fee. Contact McDowell agency if you need to request this.
8. **IF YOU WISH TO USE A VOLUNTEER WITH A QUESTIONABLE RECORD**  
Consult with the pastor and the archdiocesan Chancellor for Civil Affairs to assist you in making such a volunteer staffing decision.
9. **SHARING BACKGROUND CHECKS BETWEEN PARISHES/SCHOOLS**  
If a person volunteers or is employed at more than one parish or school within the Archdiocese, the parishes/schools may share the background check only if:
  - a) if the background check report is no more than two years old;
  - b) if the location that has the background check report on file ran that background check through The McDowell Agency and is willing to share the report;
  - c) if the location that needs a background check is willing to accept the previous background check;
  - d) if the applicant agrees to release and share the report;

If these conditions are met, have the volunteer applicant complete FORM 8: BACKGROUND CHECK REPORT SHARING AND PRE-SERVICE APPLICANT RELEASE and return it to you. You would then send a copy of this form with a written request for the volunteer applicant's background check to the parish or school where the volunteer applicant has a background check on file. File this background check sharing form with the background check report.

Because of liability issues and varying scopes of background checks run by other organizations, **do not share background check reports with entities other than parishes and schools within the Archdiocese. For these same reasons, a background check run by any organization outside of this Archdiocese may not be used.**

### C. VOLUNTEERS WITHOUT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

The Volunteer Background Check Procedures indicate that the inclusion of the volunteer's Social Security Number aids The McDowell Agency in the search for accurate background information. Note that FORM 2: VOLUNTEER PRE-SERVICE BACKGROUND SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE AND RELEASE requires that the Social Security Number be collected.

If the volunteer applicant does have a Social Security Number, a standard volunteer criminal background check package through the McDowell Agency must be performed on the volunteer applicant.

If the volunteer applicant does not have a Social Security Number, the volunteer applicant must affirmatively certify on FORM 2, or a supplement to FORM 2, that the person does not have a Social Security Number.

If the volunteer applicant does not have a Social Security Number, contact McDowell Agency to arrange for a limited background check, in addition to two letters of reference (see below).

If the volunteer applicant for service in a parish or school so certifies that they do not have a Social Security Number, the parish must collect from the applicant two signed and dated written letters of reference from known non-relative members of the community (i.e. the pastor, other parish or school leaders, an employer, etc.) describing how the applicant is known and for how long; attesting to the character, lack of misconduct/criminal history and good standing of the applicant; reliability and suitability for the volunteer position, etc. These letters of reference are to be kept on file at the parish or school.

If the volunteer applicant uses or has used more than one name, all names used must be noted on FORM 2.