PROCDURES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS
Presbytery of Cincinnati
Approved and Effective: March 13, 2007

Procedure for Policy implementation

Ministers, Presbytery staff, CLP, and Educators

Background checks shall be performed before a person is hired/called; that is, prior to the congregational meeting, or hiring action by session/Presbytery personnel committee, or action by an administrative commission. Those currently serving churches will be required to have a background check done before any new call or new position is signed and approved. Thus those in currently installed positions are ‘grandfathered’ until they change calls. If a person changes positions within the Presbytery and has already had a background check done, another check will not be necessary.

The expense for these background checks will be born by the Presbytery and charged to the budget of the Committee on Ministry (COM).

Inquirers and Candidates for Ministry; and CLP in training:

For those under the care of the Presbytery, background checks will be performed prior to each of the following events: enrollment as an Inquirer; enrollment as a Candidate; certification as ready to receive a call For those seeking to be commissioned as Lay Pastors, a background check will be made at the beginning of the training process.

The expense for these background checks will be born by the Presbytery and charged to the budget of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

All required background checks shall include:

Social Security Number Identity Verification and Address History Trace
National Criminal Database and National Sexual Violent Offender Registry Search
Statewide Criminal Search
County Criminal Search

The Presbytery reserves the right to verify employment or degrees earned.

<u>Procedures</u>

Origin of the request:

For Ministers the originating party shall be the chair of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC), or search committee.
For Presbytery staff the originating party shall be the chair of the Presbytery personnel committee
For CLP and Educators the originating party shall be the clerk of session.
For Inquirers and Candidates for Ministry, and CLP in training, the originating party shall be the chair of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

The originating party will initiate the process by obtaining a signed “Form for Requesting a Background Check” (attached) from the person whose background is to be checked. This may be initially faxed to the Presbytery office, but the signed original form must be on file at the Presbytery office before any results will be released.

For all Presbytery-required checks, the results of the background check will come directly to the General Presbyter. Positive results will be shared with the person being checked and the originating party.

In the case of negative results, the General Presbyter may seek the advice of Presbytery legal council and will share check results with the individual being checked prior to dissemination to anyone else. Results will then be shared verbally with the originating party. If deemed appropriate by the General Presbyter, the information may be shared with the moderator of the COM or CPM and with the COM cluster involved as appropriate. It is important to maintain personal confidentiality while at the same time protecting the community.

In all cases, results will be maintained for a minimum of six (6) months in confidential files regardless of whether a person is hired. Results will be maintained in the Presbytery office except for those checks required by CPM which will be maintained by the chair of CPM.

For strongly recommended checks, each church shall develop its own policy and procedures for identifying who will be checked, consistent with the state in which the church is located. Each church must determine how information will be obtained, secured and used, and must maintain confidentiality, consistent with the church's existing policy on confidentiality.