<p style="text-align: center">INFORMATION TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE</p>
<p style="text-align: center">New PA State Law, House Bill No. 435 - Prevention of Child Abuse</p>

Child Abuse is a very real threat. One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by someone during their lives; 85-90% of abuse is committed by someone known to the child.

In 2014, legislation was signed into law in Pennsylvania to further protect children and youth from abuse. The new laws expand the categories of people considered "mandated reporters" of child abuse and provide for direct reporting to PA Childline. Other changes involve the requirements for background checks for both paid employees and volunteers working with children.

Background Check Requirements Under the New Law

➢ All <u>paid</u> <u>employees</u> who have contact with children must have all three clearances listed below.

➢ All <u>volunteers</u> who have contact with children and youth and who have lived in Pennsylvania for at least 10 years need only the first two clearances listed below.

➢ All <u>volunteers</u> who have <u>lived in Pennsylvania for less than 10 years</u>, will need all three clearances listed below.

➢ <u>Clergy</u> background checks - fall under the category of "all paid employees". Please see the "Clergy background checks" section below.

Effective dates for the first three clearances below:

➢ These clearances are now required to be completed every 36 months.

➢ Employees or volunteers whose clearances are more than three years old must obtain new ones by December 31, 2015.

➢ Volunteers who do not have clearances must obtain them by July 1, 2015.

Helpful information regarding processing clearances

The Child-abuse clearances and the Criminal history record check can be processed electronically (typically the fastest method) or by mail. The FBI fingerprinting requires in-person appearance.

1. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearances (CY113) - ($10.00)
    (from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services)

Electronically: Log on to the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) self-service portal https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home. In the "Welcome to the Child Welfare Portal" click on "Create A New Account" and follow the prompts to set up an account which will allow you to

request the child-abuse clearances. You will need an email address to create an account. A credit card is required for payment. Applicants will receive their results through an automated system and will be able to view and print their results online. The self-service portal also provides the ability for organizations to create business accounts to prepay for child abuse clearances and have online access to the results.

Mail: Download and print a form by logging on to the PA Department of Human Services website. You can also stop by any County Intermediate Unit or call them for a copy of this form. Payment by mail is by money order only, made out to the Department of Public Welfare.

2. Pennsylvania Criminal Record Checks (SP4-164) - ($10.00)
   (from the Pennsylvania State Police **(PATCH).**

Electronically: Log on to https://epatch.state.pa.us/. Click on "Submit a New Record Check" (mid-page). You will then need to "accept terms" and then complete the on-line form.   A credit card is required to cover the $10 fee. In most instances, you should receive an immediate result if no criminal record exists.

Mail: Complete and mail the Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check to the Pennsylvania State Police at the address listed on the right side of the form and include a $10 money order.

3. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)   (approximately $26.50 - $28.50)
   (Criminal Background Checks which includes submission of fingerprints)

1. Register with COGENT SYSTEMS at https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index (print out the registration number) or over the phone by calling 888-439-2486 (write down registration number) Monday through Friday from 8 to 6 pm. Bring that registration number to the fingerprint site.

    NOTE: Once on the homepage, you will need to choose one of the seven category "boxes" to begin your registration.
     ➢ Choose the "Department of Public Welfare" for all church volunteer positions.
     ➢ Churches with educational programs on site (i.e. nursery school, daycare), choose the "Department of Public Welfare for teacher checks UNLESS the school is regulated by the Department of Education, then choose the Department of Education for checks on teachers.
     ➢ If you are unsure of which department to choose, you should refer to the "Contact Information" box to make a phone call to find the correct department.

    Payment can be made by credit or debit card. You will need to bring confirmation of payment to the fingerprint session. OR you may pay with a money order payable to Cogent Systems at the site.

2. Fingerprint location hours, address, and appointment information is listed on the above website (some locations require an appointment, some do not).

3. You will need to bring one of the following forms of identification with you for your fingerprint session:

-state issued driver's license	-college issued student ID
-US active duty retiree or reservist military ID card	-resident alien card issued since 1997 -temporary resident identification card
-US passport	-employment authorization card

4. Provide your employer/volunteer organization with your registration number.

More information about the electronic submission of child abuse clearances or Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Background Check, can be found at: http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/findaform/childabusehistoryclearanceforms/.

4. Clergy Background Checks - Oxford Document Management Systems, Inc.
The United Church of Christ requires a background check for all pastors actively engaged in ministry. This applies to all authorized pastors - ordained, licensed, commissioned. The UCC currently contracts with Oxford Document Management Systems, Inc. This background check includes the following three searches at a current cost of $160.00 and is valid for 18 months:

- *Social Security Number (SSN) Trace* (no credit reports): verifies name & address information
- *Criminal History:* includes county, state*, federal jurisdiction searches and national background directory search. *(search includes residential and employment addresses)*
  *Due to the new law Oxford is now using the PA (PATCH) search (PA criminal record check from the PA state police) for candidates who have address or work history in the past 7 years in Pennsylvania at the time of filling out Oxford's online authorization form. This search includes information on crimes "charged" as well as additional information on arrests not leading to conviction. This will be a separate attachment to the final report generated on the candidate.

- *National Sex Offender Registry:*
  The National Sex Offender Public Registry is a cooperative effort among state agencies and the federal government that consolidates sex offender information from the individual states that can be accessed through a single website. Maintained by the U.S. Department of Justice, the site allows a user to submit a national query to obtain information about sex offenders through many search options, including name, county, city, name and zip code. It returns a profile of the sex offender, including conviction data.

- Oxford background checks **do not include PA Abuse Clearance or FBI check (fingerprinting).** These must be obtained by individual clergy through the proper channels.

- Per information from the Mr. Donald Clark, General Counsel, UCC. "*Clergypersons should be aware that they may still have to obtain the Pennsylvania State Police Background Check if the Oxford background check attached to the ministerial profile becomes outdated in accordance with the law requiring clearances to be performed every 36 months.*" (PA_Child_Abuse_Laws_Update_OGC.pdf, page 8.)

If a clergy at your church is in need of a current Oxford background check, please contact Rev. Sharon Morris, Associate Conference Minister, PSEC at 484-949-8774 X302.

Mandated Reporting - Training in recognizing and reporting child abuse
(required mandated reporting for EXISTING employees only (not volunteers) is to be completed by June 2015

1. On line training can be obtained from www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu. This two to three hour course, offered through the University of Pittsburgh, can be taken on line (at different sittings) and when completed, a certificate can be printed. This free program is approved by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. There are other programs available; however, there is a cost for those programs.

2. The PA Department of Human Services' http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/ website has complete details, including a Q&A about mandated reporting of suspected child abuse. To report suspected child abuse go to https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home or call 1-800-932-0313.

3. The Center for Children's Justice (C4CJ) and NOVA offer a Webinar entitled: *Protecting PA's Children: What Adult Volunteers Working with Children Need to Know.* **The next Webinar will be held on Tuesday, March 31st from 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.** (including ½ hour for Q&A). There is a cost of $15.00 to join the Webinar. Registration is being handled at the following link: [https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eapwi52u3efb45a2&oseq=&c=43 19f3a0-b91a-11e4-b662-d4ae529a848a&ch=431f23c0-b91a-11e4-b662-d4ae529a848a](https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eapwi52u3efb45a2&oseq=&c=4319f3a0-b91a-11e4-b662-d4ae529a848a&ch=431f23c0-b91a-11e4-b662-d4ae529a848a)

Frequently asked questions

1. Who should coordinate background check information for your church?

    -A staff member other than the pastor.

    -Someone who, them self, has current and clear background checks and can maintain confidentiality.

2. Who pays for the background check?

    -The individual or the church can pay for the required checks.

3. If a teacher is a member of the congregation, can he/she use his/her school background check?

    -They can, however, someone from the church authorized to do so (church administrator, pastor, etc.) must make a copy of the *original* background check document.

4. Do outside groups who meet in our church need background checks?

    -If children are involved, yes. The outside groups are responsible for the children in the program. The church is responsible for making sure that group is following through on their responsibility. The outside group must provide the church with a written document indicating they are in compliance with the church policies.

Helpful Links:

UCC Safe Church Documents:

[Safebook](#)

[Sample Disclosure A](#)

[Sample Disclosure B](#)

[Safe Church Policy](#)

[Safe Church Policy WORD](#)

[Guide to developing abuse prevention policies](#)

[PA Department of Human Services Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Safe Conduct Workbench from UCC Insurance Board](#)