

SAFE SPACES

A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE TO VOLUNTEER
AND STAFF SCREENING AND SAFETY



BACKGROUND SCREENING | WHY SCREEN?¹

SIX GOOD REASONS

Carefully screening people before allowing them to be involved in your programs is an essential investment in your ministry's future. The right background screening programs:

- 1.** Protect your church or ministry from incidents of child sexual abuse.
- 2.** Prevent you from appointing staff or volunteers who may skim money from church accounts.
- 3.** Enable you to select drivers for church vehicles who have safe driving records.
- 4.** Allow you to select appropriate leaders for your ministry.
- 5.** Help you attract new members and recruit volunteers who want to be involved in a safe ministry.
- 6.** Reduce your ministry's liability in court if something goes wrong, because it demonstrates that your ministry takes reasonable care to safeguard its members.

¹ <https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/background-screening/why-screen/>

BACKGROUND SCREENING | WHO TO SCREEN?²

IT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Churches and related ministries should invest in background screening services for paid employees, those in leadership positions, and all volunteers.

While background screening is a good way to prevent incidents of child sexual abuse, it's also useful in selecting the right people to assist with ministry finances and other valuable resources. As your ministry develops and implements a background screening program, keep in mind:

- Employees and volunteers who have frequent contact with children, the elderly, or people with disabilities should be held to a higher standard.
- Pastors, treasurers, and other people in leadership positions should undergo a thorough review.
- Drivers of ministry vehicles should have impeccable driving records.

WHAT'S REQUIRED?

Some states require background screening for workers involved in certain programs and ministries. If you are unfamiliar with the laws in your state, check with a local attorney to learn more.

² <https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/background-screening/who-to-screen/>

WHAT'S WISE?

Even if state law does not require your ministry to conduct background checks, creating and implementing a program is in your ministry's best interest. Think about the costs—both monetary and emotional—associated with an employee or volunteer within your ministry committing a crime or acting inappropriately.

A background screening program protects your ministry and demonstrates to your employees, volunteers, and members that your church cares about keeping its people and its resources safe.

EMPLOYEE / VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

BACKGROUND SCREENING

	YES	NEEDS ATTENTION
Do we conduct background screens on all volunteers and employees, including clergy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If not, do we screen all employees and volunteers who work with children, handle money, or drive church vehicles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does our background screen include a written application, investigation into prior church membership and volunteer work, reference checks, a personal interview, and a criminal records check?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do our criminal records checks include the four basics: a nationwide criminal records database search, an address history, Social Security number verification, and county court records searches in counties where the applicant has lived?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we ask volunteers to wait until they are associated with our ministry for at least six months before allowing them involvement with children of any age?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we require all prospective employees to sign a liability release that grants consent for us to contact former employers and to conduct a criminal record check?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we make all job application documents “confidential,” store them in a locked file, and keep them for at least three years if the person is not hired?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After confidential files have been retained for the proper amount of time, do we dispose of them by shredding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we permanently retain--in a locked, confidential file--all employment documents pertaining to job applicants who are hired?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we store the confidential application files of volunteers as securely as we do those of paid workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we maintain permanently--in a locked, confidential file--all documents pertaining to volunteers who work with children or youth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes: _____

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

NEED A BACKGROUND CHECK?

LET US HELP

We've partnered with First Advantage³ to provide your ministry a cost effective, comprehensive background check for staff and volunteers alike. To order one or more background checks through us, visit the following web address:

BrethrenChurch.org/brethren-background-checks

Complete the online form, submit consent forms, and make payment and allow approximately 7-10 days to receive your background check results.

Consent forms can be download from the online registration form, or a copy has been provided in this guide.

While we offer both Criminal History and Drive Record background checks, we are able to offer additional types of background checks through First Advantage. For a complete list of background checks offered, please email Ryan@brethrenchurch.org

³ <https://www.fadv.com/>

FAQ's

COMMON QUESTIONS

What's involved in the screening process?

The type of background check you choose for a particular employee or volunteer will depend upon their role in your ministry. Certain positions, like those that involve children or finances, may require more scrutiny than others. Choose a background screening provider that offers different screening options, to make it easier for your ministry to customize your screening program based on your unique needs.

Is a check of my state's sex offender registry enough?

Not all background checks are created equal. Some background screening providers claim to give customers the results they need from a "national criminal database" search. The truth is, there is not a single database in this nation complete enough to rely on it alone for a background check.

Do I need written permission to screen a potential employee or volunteer?

Yes. Federal law requires that job candidates and volunteers give written permission before a background check can be conducted. Your background screening provider should be able to provide you with the appropriate forms. You'll need to ask your candidate to fill in the relevant information and sign the form. Then you can submit it to your screening provider for processing.

Can I obtain a prospect's driving records?

Yes. Most screening services provide this option. The service's customer service representatives will explain the process and send you the necessary forms. You should be able to order driving records independently of other screening options.

