FAQ: Child Protection Screening

What is Child Protection Screening?

Child Protection Screening is a program designed to 1) train our volunteers on how to recognize abuse of children and 2) prevent child predators from being in volunteer positions, allowing them access to children in church. The program includes a training video with quizzes that help our volunteers understand the effects of abuse, the symptoms of abuse, how to recognize abuse, and how to deal with it when it's recognized.

What is Verified Volunteers?

Verified Volunteers (VV) is the new vendor we are using to implement our Child Protection Screening program. The North American Division (NAD) is responsible for the Child Protection Screening program nationwide, and when the contract with Shield the Vulnerable ended in 2016, we began using Verified Volunteers instead. We are very pleased with VV overall, for a myriad of reasons, and are glad for a change in vendor.

Who is required to take the training/background check?

Our general rule of thumb is this: if a person volunteering at the church should be perceived as a safe person by a child, then they should be taking the training. There may be positions that don't qualify – the volunteer custodian who works at midnight, for example. When in doubt, err on the side of requiring the volunteer to take the training.

What is the cost to the church?

The cost to the church is $1 for the training and $13 for the background check. There may be additional fees if the local counties have charges for record checks. Costs greater than $14 per volunteer are subsidized by the Conference. How thorough is the background check? Does it include financial records?

What kind of data being accessed as part of the background check?

The background check portion pulls the following data:

- Government Watch List Search
- Department of Justice Sex Offender List
- Department of Public Safety and Trial Courts State Criminal Search
- Motor Vehicle Record Check (depending on type of volunteer position)

The check includes the following locator products/search tools:

- Nationwide Search
- Social Security Trace

Basically, what the above means is that the company is looking for any criminal activity at the federal, state, and county level. Additionally, they check to see if the person is a registered sex offender. They

use a nationwide search engine and social security trace to perform these searches. At no time are financial records searched.

Are financial records pulled as part of the background check?

No. Background checks are governed under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which may confuse some volunteers. The background checks performed by Verified Volunteers do not check financial information.

What is the Fair Credit Reporting Act?

Some volunteers may be confused because the disclosure information at the beginning of the background check mentions the Fair Credit Reporting Act. The Fair Credit Reporting Act is the legislation which governs all searches, financial reviews, and background checks by anyone in the United States. The background checks being performed through Verified Volunteers do not check financial information.

How often do we need to retake the training/background check?

Child Protection Screening is good for three years. So, if a Volunteer completed the Child Protection Screening (which is both the background check and training) on January 21, 2017, they would retake it by January 21, 2020.

Does Shield the Vulnerable data have any bearing on the current system?

Unfortunately, Shield the Vulnerable (STV) has refused to provide data to Verified Volunteers. Under the North American Division's (NAD) contract with STV, the church owns the data. Because of their refusal, the NAD is pursuing all proper courses to regain control of the data. Because we do not have STV data, the only way we have of checking to see if someone completed STV is through eAdventist. This means that the local administrator will need to work with their church clerk to review the "Volunteer" tab on the person's profile in eAdventist to determine whether or not a Volunteer needs to do the Child Protection Screening through our new vendor, Verified Volunteers.

Can two or more people use the same email address?

No. The system may allow someone to create a profile using the same email address as someone else, but it will not process the background check correctly if two or more people use the same email address. There are websites that offer free email addresses, such as gmail.com, yahoo.com, outlook.com.

Do minors need to complete the Child Protection Screening?

No. Minors should not take Child Protection Screening. They are not eligible to complete the background check.

How is the local church notified that someone has completed the Child Protection Screening?

At 60-days and 30-days, the Conference Administrators, the Local Administrator, and the Volunteer are all notified that it's time for the Volunteer to redo the Child Protection Screening. These notifications will only work for the volunteers who have completed Child Protection Screening under our new vendor, Verified Volunteers.

Who are the Conference administrators for the Child Protection Screening program?

The Human Resources Director and the Administrative Assistant to Human Resources administer the program. The Administrative Assistant monitors the program on a daily/weekly basis to communicate, as necessary, with local administrators of the program. The Administrative Assistant does not review background checks. The Human Resources Director reviews background checks that come back marked as "Consider." This means the background check could've turned up a traffic violation, or something worse. Depending on the type of "hit" on the background, the Director either marks the Volunteer as "Eligible," marks them as "Eligible" and asked the Administrative Assistant to communicate to the local administrator any contingencies to the "Eligible" status, or brings the background check to the Conference Administrative Committee (ADCO). The Director does not bring a name, but describes the type of hit in the background check. ADCO decides, based on the hit, what action to take. In general, the following communication process is expected whenever ther eis a hit that must be considered further:

    a. Director contacts the local pastor/administrator to let them know the nature of the hit.
    b. The local pastor/administrator talks to the person about the hit to find out if the hit is accurate.
    c. If the hit is accurate, then the pastor discusses the hit with the person. Sometimes, this means offering help.
    d. If the person can no longer volunteer based on the type of hit (i.e. registered sex offender), the church should have policies in place on how to deal with that. It's possible this may need to be discussed in Church Board to determine how to move forward.
    e. The local pastor/administrator reports back to the Director how the conversation went with the volunteer and what the church plans to do moving forward.

What happens with a negative report on a background check? What does the Conference do? What does the church do?

The Human Resources Director reviews background checks that come back marked as "Consider." This means the background check could've turned up a traffic violation, or something worse. Depending on the type of "hit" on the background, the Director either marks the Volunteer as "Eligible," marks them as "Eligible" and asked the Administrative Assistant to communicate to the local administrator any contingencies to the "Eligible" status, or brings the background check to the Conference Administrative Committee (ADCO). The Director does not bring a name, but describes the type of hit in the background check. ADCO decides, based on the hit, what action to take. In general, the following communication process is expected whenever there is a hit that must be considered further:

    a. Director contacts the local pastor/administrator to let them know the nature of the hit.

b. The local pastor/administrator talks to the person about the hit to find out if the hit is accurate.
c. If the hit is accurate, then the pastor discusses the hit with the person. Sometimes, this means offering help.
d. If the person can no longer volunteer based on the type of hit (i.e. registered sex offender), the church should have policies in place on how to deal with that. It's possible this may need to be discussed in Church Board to determine how to move forward.
e. The local pastor/administrator reports back to the Director how the conversation went with the volunteer and what the church plans to do moving forward.