



Dear FPCA Volunteers:

Thank you for your interest in serving the children of our church! Our main priority is to keep our children safe while they are under our care. Due to this fact, and in accordance with PA Act 153, we require background checks on all volunteers.

Additional information on the requirements pertaining to Child Abuse Clearances can also be found on www.KeepKidsSafe.PA.gov.

Effective July 1, 2015, any adult applying for an unpaid position as a volunteer that will have direct contact with children will be required to complete ALL of the following items to be in compliance with our church volunteer policy:

- Volunteer Application with 3 non-family references (to include the name, address, telephone number, email address, and length of relationship)
- Copy of current driver's license
- Pennsylvania State Criminal Record Check (PSP)
- Child Abuse History Clearance from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (Child Abuse)
- A fingerprint-based Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal history if the volunteer has lived outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years - **OR** - a notarized affidavit stating the volunteer is not disqualified from service if the volunteer has lived in the state of Pennsylvania for the past 10+ consecutive years. This affidavit is available on the church's website, www.fpcallentown.org under "Forms & Events".
- Youth Protection Training online through the Boy Scouts of America. There is no cost for this training and a certificate will be available for you to print out when you have completed the online training

All volunteers will be required to renew all clearances every 5 years, based on the earliest expiration of submitted clearance documents.

Completed clearances should be submitted to: Joanne Stock, Ministry Support

Clearances can be printed and dropped off to the church office or emailed to joanne.stock@fpcallentown.org. Volunteers have 30 days to complete and submit their clearances. If the requirements are not completed within that timeframe, the application process must be restarted.

For electronic submission of the clearances below, please go to the following websites to complete the clearance process:

Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Criminal Record Check:

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/>

- Complete a New Record Check. You will receive a receipt with your information and a Record Number. You will need this information to log back in to the website, check the status of the clearance, and enter in the receipt information. Click on your record # to print out the completed clearance document.

Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Child Abuse):

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

- Go to the Child Welfare Portal and create an individual log-in (if you do not currently have one). Please make sure to write down your User Name and Password so you can access this website again.

FBI Criminal Background check through IdentoGO.com (for those who have not resided in the State of PA for 10 consecutive years):

- Contact Joanne Stock or Tara Drayer at the church office to receive a payment code PRIOR to beginning this clearance.
- Go to the IdentoGO Website at: <https://www.identoGO.com>
- Click on "Get Fingerprinted" at the top right side of the page.
- Select a fingerprinting service by State: Pennsylvania
- Select State: Enter Pennsylvania
- Select enrollment service: Digital Fingerprinting
- Enter the church's service code: 1KG738
- Click on "Schedule and Appointment" and complete all requested personal information.
- Enter the payment code you received.
- Schedule your appointment at the location and time of your choice.
- Print out the registration receipt to take with you to the fingerprinting center.
- You will receive another receipt once your fingerprints have been taken, which needs to be submitted to the church office.
- It will take at least 1 week or longer to receive the FBI Clearance back, and then that needs to be turned in to the church office.

Those who have lived in the State of PA for 10+ consecutive years can just submit a completed and notarized affidavit:

- The affidavit can be accessed at www.fpcallentown.org under the "Forms and Events" page.

The FBI clearance requires online registration and payment, and then a physical visit to get fingerprinted with registration in hand. Please keep in mind that it may take a few weeks to obtain the FBI fingerprint report, so please plan accordingly.

Youth Protection Training through the Boy Scouts of America

<https://my.scouting.org>

- Click on the “Create Account” link at the top left of the page.
- Once your account is established, login and click on the “menu” link at the top left of the page. Then choose “dashboard.”
- Once you reach the dashboard, choose the course named “Youth Protection Training” to participate in the training module.

To print the certificate after completion:

- Click on MENU (very top left of the screen)
- Click on MY DASHBOARD
- Beneath the navy blue menu line at the top of the page, click on COMPLETION.
- You should be able to click on the link for the course you just completed.
- Print the certificate.

Volunteers Frequently Asked Questions

Who needs clearances?

If you are an adult applying for an unpaid position as a volunteer responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children, you will need clearances.

Examples of unpaid positions as a volunteer responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children can include but are not limited to:

- Parent/Guardian chaperones for schools
- Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts
- Agency volunteers that help with transportation or other services
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Literacy programs
- Little League
- Coaches
- Church Sunday school teachers, child event coordinators
- Hospital volunteers working with children

NOTE: The above list is NOT inclusive of all volunteers. Please follow the following guidance to determine if a volunteer is required to obtain clearances:

In order to determine who in your agency or organization is required to obtain clearances as a condition of volunteering with children, you must first confirm that the applicant is an adult, as only adult volunteers are required to obtain all of the clearances. You should then carefully consider whether the volunteer is responsible for the welfare of a child or has direct contact with children.

When determining whether a volunteer is responsible for the welfare of a child consider whether the volunteer is acting in lieu of or on behalf of a parent. If they are acting in lieu of or on behalf of a parent, they will need clearances. If a determination is made that the volunteer is not responsible for the welfare of a child, you then move on to the second avenue for consideration; whether they have direct contact with children.

The second avenue for consideration is whether the volunteer has direct contact with children because they provide care, supervision, guidance or control of children or have routine interaction with children. As the terms are not defined in the statute we suggest that the common meaning of these terms be used with child safety serving as the paramount consideration. If the answer to this question is that they provide care, guidance, supervision or control of children, they need clearances. If, however, you determine they do not provide care, guidance, supervision or control of children, you then must consider whether they have routine interaction with children.

With regard to routine interaction with children, consideration should be given to what the volunteer's role is within the agency. Is their contact with children regular, ongoing contact that is integral to their volunteer responsibilities?

If you determine they do have direct contact with children, they need clearances. If, however, you determine that they do not have direct contact with children, clearances are not required. Please be sure to consult your legal counsel when making these determinations.

What is the definition of child?

For purposes of clearances, a child is an individual under 18 years of age.

How is direct contact with children defined?

Direct contact with children is defined in § 6303 (relating to definitions) as the care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.

How often do I need to renew my clearance?

All volunteers will be required to obtain clearances every 5 years. If an individual or agency, however, elects to renew all clearances at the same time, the date of the oldest clearance, rather than the most recent, is the date to be used for the renewal date.

How much do the clearances cost?

- The PSP criminal history clearance costs \$0
- The Child Abuse clearance costs \$0
- Mandatory Reporting costs - \$0
- The FBI federal criminal history clearance costs \$22.60 through Identigo. This fee is paid for by the church.

As a volunteer, do I obtain my Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal History check through the Department of Education or the Department of Human Services?

The agency under which an applicant should submit their FBI clearance application is based on the agency or organization for which they intend to volunteer.

If the applicant intends to volunteer in a school or at a school related function, they would apply for their FBI clearance through the Department of Education.

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If the applicant intends to volunteer with children in any other capacity outside of a school setting or function, such as a group home for children, in a church, as a Little League or soccer coach, etc. they would apply for their FBI clearance through the Department of Human Services.

Can I use a child abuse history clearance or PSP criminal history I obtained for my volunteer activities for other volunteer activities?

Yes, any person who obtained their clearances within the previous 36 months may serve in a volunteer capacity for any program, activity or service.

Can I use a child abuse history clearance or PSP criminal history clearance I obtained for my volunteer activities for employment purposes?

No. Child abuse history clearances and PSP criminal history clearances obtained for volunteer purposes can only be used for other volunteer activities. Child abuse history clearances obtained for volunteer purposes will indicate that the clearance is to be used for volunteer purposes only.

Is the use of a third-party vendor to process clearances acceptable?

Third-party vendors may be used to process Child Abuse, PSP and FBI clearances using the steps established above. They are not permitted to conduct background checks or clearances through other databases in lieu of the steps outlined above. In addition, persons responsible for the selection of volunteers remain responsible for selection decision based upon the information obtained.

What is the provisional clearance requirement for volunteers?

Individuals who reside in another state or country may serve as a volunteer for no more than 30 days as long as they provide clearances from their state or country of residence. If the individual will be volunteering for more than 30 days, they must obtain clearances as outlined above under “Which clearances are needed.” Volunteers who reside in Pennsylvania do not have a provisional period and must obtain clearances as outlined above under “Which clearances are needed.”

Is the person responsible for acceptance of volunteers required to keep a copy of my clearances?

Yes, pursuant to § 6344 (b.1), the employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for employment decisions or acceptance of the individual to serve in any capacity requiring clearances, shall maintain copies of the required information and require the individual to produce the original documents prior to employment or acceptance to serve in any such capacity, except provisional employees for limited periods as described in § 6344.2 (f) and outlined above. An employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for selection of volunteers that intentionally fails to require an applicant to submit the required clearance before the applicant’s hiring commits a misdemeanor of the third degree.

Agencies are reminded that the Child Abuse clearance information is confidential and may not be released to other individuals.

Can an agency or organization institute additional standards?

Yes, nothing prohibits an organization from requiring additional information as part of the clearance process.

Are there any other requirements?

If a volunteer is arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity or service, or is named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, the volunteer must provide the administrator or their designee with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that the person has been listed as a perpetrator in the statewide database.

A volunteer who willfully fails to disclose information as required above commits a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination or denial of a volunteer position.

