PROCEDURES FOR BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESSING
IN
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA

Intro:
Safe Church Policy requirements for background checks have increased significantly. The Diocese has contracted with Protect My Ministry, a company currently serving about 1/3 of the Episcopal Dioceses in The Episcopal Church to help congregations complete background checks most efficiently and cost-effectively.* This will enable parishes to initiate background checks as well as set up their billing account. All completed background checks will be set up, initiated, and processed at the congregational level.

In this document, you will find information for setting up your Protect My Ministry Account.

* To use another provider you must seek prior permission from the Diocesan Office. Contact Teresa Phares (tphares@epiok.org) for more information.

Step One: Set-Up with Protect My Ministry

- All congregations should sign up by contacting Marla Wierzel at marla.wierzel@ministrybrands.com or 813-467-8800. Marla will assist you with setting up your account. It takes approximately 5 minutes.
- **There is an $85 fee to set up your account**. This fee is the required fee by the federal government to ensure you are a legal entity that can initiate a credit check. There are no other fees associated with set up with Protect My Ministry. This is a required fee. You cannot complete credit checks without the site visit, which can now be completed via Zoom.
- Prior to signing up you will need to know and have available the following:
  - **Your preferred payment method**. You have the option to pay by invoice or with a credit card.
    - If by invoice, you will need your billing contact, address, and phone.
    - If by credit card, you will need your credit card number, address, phone, and name on the card.
  - **You will need to provide an EIN number and upload one of the following: 501-c3 status form or insurance certificate to verify your congregational identity**.
- It takes Protect My Ministry approximately 24-48 business hours to set up your account. Once your account is set up your account contact will receive an email with your username and a temporary password.
- All screening package options have been designed by and approved by the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma.
  - They fulfill the requirements for the Staff or Volunteer Basic Background Check, Credit Check, and Motor Vehicle Check as identified in the Safe Church policies.
  - You may also select from an ala carte menu of individual screening options, however, we generally do not recommend this.
- Should you have questions while you set up your account or afterwards, please contact Marla Wiezerl at 813-467-8800 and she will assist you.

Step Two: Initiating A Background Check
Log into your Protect My Ministry Account, add the **applicant's name, email, the type of background check** and hit send.

The applicant will receive an email giving them instructions on how to complete the form to initiate the background check.

For Staff Background Checks: We have worked with Protect My Ministry to limit the number of educational institutions that will be checked to one, and the number of aliases to two, to avoid high charges for the congregations. If you do need more educational institutions and aliases checked for the applicant, please contact Teresa Phares (TPhares@epiok.org) to assist you.

To determine who needs a background check and what type is required please reference Appendix A found in the Safe Church Policies.

Step Three: Background Check Results
Once a background check has been completed in the online system, it should be reviewed by the designated person at the congregation. Designated individuals should be one of the following: clergy, Senior Warden, or other designated authority (Safe Church Administrator). *Please note, it is the responsibility of the congregation to review background checks. If you ever need assistance or have questions about a "red flag" please reach out to Teresa Phares (tphares@epiok.org) and she will help you navigate the next steps.

If the individual is a new hire, please attach a copy of the background check to the new hire paperwork you submit to the Diocesan Office. If the background check is for a current employee, please let Martha Smith (MSmith@epiok.org) know so she can add it to the appropriate file. All current employees must have an up-to-date background check on file by October 1st, 2023.

Questions: Should you have questions outside of the set-up process please contact Teresa Phares (tphares@epiok.org).

Background Check Packages Provided by Protect My Ministry

FAQs for Background Checks (for everyone)

Appendix A from the Proposed Safe Church Policies (for everyone)