

Diocese of Saginaw

Criminal Background Screening Policy

The Diocese of Saginaw values the safety of its children, youth, vulnerable adults, employees, volunteers, and the people whom it works with and serves. Accordingly, the diocese must take prudent measures to protect its people. This policy and accompanying procedures became effective on March 1, 2004, was revised in January 2014, was revised again on July 16, 2019, and revised again on December 12, 2022.

GENERAL POLICY REGARDING SCREENING

The Diocese of Saginaw mandates that a criminal history background check, ICHAT, is required for:

- All paid church personnel including those paid by stipend, whether they have contact with minors (anyone under 18 years of age) or not. This includes all paid personnel who provide services to the diocese, parish, school or early childhood center, or any other diocesan institution.
- All volunteers who have contact with children/youth at the diocese, parish, school or early childhood center, or any other diocesan institution. This includes adults who hold meetings with children or youth on church/school property, such as Boy/Girl Scout activities. This includes adults on overnight trips with children/youth.¹

The Diocese of Saginaw mandates that the Michigan State Police/FBI Fingerprint background check with live scan fingerprint is required for:

- All paid school personnel as mandated/required by the State of Michigan.
- The Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw requires that all volunteers who serve the schools have a Michigan State Police/FBI Fingerprint background check with live scan fingerprint, including [but not limited to] volunteer coaches; youth ministers; child care volunteers; all priests, religious, and deacons assigned to a parish with a school; and clergy with regular or frequent contact with a school in the Diocese of Saginaw. (This group has both the fingerprint check and ICHAT check.)

Minors (anyone under 18 years of age) who volunteer to work with children in programs at the diocese, parish, school or early childhood center, or any other diocesan institution shall complete and have their parent/guardian complete and sign the “Minor’s Statement of Background” form.

TYPE OF BACKGROUND SEARCH

Criminal Background searches include:

- Michigan State Police Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT)

¹ Students ages of 18-19 are not required to have criminal background checks (ICHAT) if their participation in a youth event is solely as a student, that is, with no responsibility as an adult for supervision. If participating in an overnight trip, the student would room only with those age of 18 and above unless with family members.

- Out-of-State Background Check for persons who have lived outside of Michigan within the past seven years²
- Michigan State Police/FBI Background Check with Live Scan Fingerprint.

COST

The Diocese of Saginaw will cover the cost of the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) and any check needed to verify an applicant’s identity. The cost of any additional required background check, such as, the out-of-state or country check and the Michigan State/FBI Check is covered by the requesting diocesan department, institution, agency, parish or school.

PROCEDURE

Requirement for Employment/Volunteer Activity: A criminal history background check is a condition of employment or volunteering for those individuals described above.

- At the time of employment, assignment or request to volunteer, the applicant will be provided with a copy of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw Background Check Policy and an Authorization Form to conduct the background check.
- The background check for employees and volunteers is initiated as soon as possible for employment or volunteer activity. The result of the background check will determine whether the person may be placed or retained in an employee or volunteer position.
- The Minor’s Statement of Background must be completed prior to the minor being a volunteer.

Current church personnel and volunteers may be screened at any time at the discretion of the diocese. In January 2023, the Office of Compliance began renewing criminal background checks (ICHAT) every 5 years.

RESPONSIBLE AGENT

Requests for a criminal history background check are handled by the hiring agency and/or the agency handling volunteer applicants.

The hiring agency for all employees and/or the agency responsible for volunteers who will have regular contact with children/youth, gives the person a copy of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw Policy on Background Checks and a copy of the Authorization Form which the applicant completes and signs. Two copies are made of this form. One copy is given to the applicant and the other copy is kept in the personnel file of the diocese, parish, agency, school or early childhood center. The original signed Authorization Form is sent to the Diocese of Saginaw Office of Compliance which conducts the ICHAT background check.

² Criminal history background checks will encompass all the places that the person has lived within the past seven years. Out-of-country background checks will be conducted where possible.

In addition to the ICHAT check, as noted earlier, all paid school personnel are required by Michigan law to have a Michigan State Police/FBI background check with live scan fingerprint. The Diocese of Saginaw requires that all volunteers who regularly or frequently serve the schools, including [but not limited to] coaches; youth ministers; child care volunteers; all priests, religious, and deacons assigned to a parish with a school; and clergy with regular or frequent contact with a school are required to have a Michigan State Police/FBI background check with live scan fingerprint. All Catholic schools must follow the requirements for background checks according to Michigan law.

A copy of the Minor's Statement of Background form is kept in the school/parish personnel file and the original is sent to the Diocese of Saginaw Office of Compliance.

The Office of Compliance will serve as a resource to the hiring agents and volunteer coordinators in conducting and processing required background checks.

COMPLIANCE MONITORING

Each parish pastor, director of parish life, school principal, diocesan agency leader, and early childhood center director shall designate a person to monitor compliance. The designated person will maintain a record of all people required to have a criminal history background check. In addition, each agency will cooperate with the Office of Compliance in keeping and maintaining mutual and updated records including seasonal coaches and personnel.

COMMUNICATING RESULTS OF CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS

In cases where a criminal conviction is discovered through ICHAT or other investigative organizations, the Office of Compliance will promptly notify the hiring entity or the entity dealing with volunteers.

Access to information received from the background check will be limited to the requesting agency, the Office of Compliance, the Office of the Bishop and any other person involved with the background check results. FBI/Fingerprint reports will be handled according to the law for such reports.

A final determination regarding future service of any employee or volunteer will be made in consultation with the hiring agent or the agent responsible for volunteer personnel and the Diocesan Delegate for Safe Environment. The Bishop has the right to withhold approval of accepting the hiring or volunteer services.

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