



Northeastern Minnesota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Guidelines

Background Checks and Service Requirements for Adult Leaders Participating in the NE MN Synod Journey to the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering

This synod values the safety and well-being of its members, those served by the synod, and in particular, the youth who participate in synod sponsored events. In order to help make the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Journey to the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering as safe as possible, background checks will be performed on all adults designated by their congregation or the synod to participate in the Synod Journey as Primary Leaders, Adult Leaders, Synod Journey Planning Team members, or other appointed volunteer roles related to the Synod Journey. All adults on the Synod Journey are required to be age 21 or older by June 23, 2018.

What follows are general guidelines for background checks related to the Synod Journey. The synod seeks to apply these guidelines uniformly to all participating adults. Previous background checks are not accepted.

- **TYPES OF CHECKS** – Areas covered in the check include, but are not limited to:
 - Criminal history
 - Sex offender database
- **ADDITIONAL CHECKS** – Other types of checks may be added if reasonable to do so. The NE MN Synod is not bound to use exactly the same checks for all volunteers. If background checks other than those listed above will be done, the applicant will be notified.
- **WHO RECEIVES REPORTS** – Background check reports are accessed by the NE MN Synod Coordinator of Youth Ministry and other designated synod staff. Reports are shared with the Bishop or the Bishop's Assistants as necessary when negative information is discovered. Information is shared only in relation to the volunteer's work with The Synod Journey. Reports are not shared with others unless written authorization is provided.

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- **NOTIFICATION OF NEGATIVE INFORMATION DISCOVERED** – When information is received that, if accurate, could result in denial of a volunteer’s participation, the information is shared first with the volunteer. If, after reviewing the report, the volunteer believes the information is inaccurate, he or she will normally be put in contact with the company doing the background check to challenge the findings. The volunteer will be given a reasonable amount of time to dispute the information in the report and have the records corrected.

If the negative information in the report is proved accurate by admission of the volunteer or further investigation, the pastor and/or president of the volunteer’s congregation will be notified and encouraged to complete their own background check. Negative information may result in dismissal from the Synod Journey.

- **DELIBERATE FALSE REPORTING** – Deliberately giving false or misleading information, or deliberately withholding information of an important nature, will, except in special circumstances, result in denial of volunteer participation.
- **COPY OF REPORT FOR VOLUNTEER** – Upon request, the volunteer may obtain a copy of his or her background check report.
- **TIME LIMIT ON AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK** – Background checks will be conducted by October 15, 2017 or within 2 weeks of registering as a substitution for another adult leader. Background checks are valid for 5 years. Synod Journey Adult Leaders who successfully passed a background check for the 2015 NE MN Synod Journey do not need to submit to a background check for the 2018 NE MN Synod Journey.
- **REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVING AS A PRIMARY LEADER, ADULT LEADER, SYNOD JOUREY PLANNING TEAM MEMBER, OR OTHER APPOINTED VOLUNTEER FOR THE NE MN SYNOD JOURNEY -**
 - Must be at least 21 years old by June 23, 2018.
 - Must submit online consent for background check by October 15, 2017 or within 2 weeks of registering as a substitution for an adult leader.
 - Must successfully complete a background check.

For more information, contact the Office of the Bishop at 218.724.4424.