

**GUIDELINES ON BACKGROUND CHECKS – THE HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS, MARCH 2014**  
**Revised July 20, 2014**

The Holy Synod, at its most recent meeting held March 18-21, 2014, issued the following **Guidelines on Background Checks**.

Documentation from the background checks on all lay church workers for whom such checks are required by OCA regulations shall be requested and received by the parish rector (or head of church institution) and stored **confidentially and securely** at the parish. If the background check raises questions about the person's suitability for church service, then the rector (or head of church institution) is to pass this information on to the ruling bishop and consult with him about the next steps to take.

Documentation from background checks on readers, subdeacons, deacons and priests is to be requested and received by the ruling bishop and stored **confidentially and securely** at the central diocesan location. If the background check raises questions about the person's suitability for church service, then the bishop is to determine the next steps to take.

A background check must be obtained, and renewed every three years for all readers, subdeacons, deacons, priests, and bishops in the Orthodox Church in America, as well as for all laypersons who have more than incidental contact with children in the course of their work in the Church. The criminal background checks are to be kept on file for three years until the individual's next background check is conducted, at which point the original may be destroyed. Sensitive data, such as social security numbers, should be blacked out.

The OCA Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations recommends the following background check company:

**Single Source Services**                      [www.singlesourceservices.com](http://www.singlesourceservices.com)

**Background Check Matrix**

Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Clergy Lesser orders (subdeacons & readers) Youth Volunteers	Parish Council members Paid Employees	All level 3 and level 2 positions plus other leadership roles including: choir directors, greeters, catechists, altar servers, etc.
OCA Basic Criminal Screen w/MVR & Federal Criminal	Discovery Plus w/ 1 County Criminal	Sex offender search
Discovery multi-jurisdiction database search  Residence Trace with 7 yr. Felony / Misdemeanor county criminal searches (all counties in prior 7 years of residence included in package)  Driving History (MVR) & Federal Criminal	Discovery multi jurisdiction database search  Residence Trace with <b>one</b> 7 year Felony / Misdemeanor county criminal search (current county of residence)	State sex offender registry check
\$31.50 + Fees (if applicable)	\$16.95 + Fees (if applicable)	Free online
Required	Strongly recommended	Required

Sexual Abuse Prevention Training of all youth workers is required by PSP Section 14.01. ORSMA recommends the following program to meet this requirement:

**Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children**                      [www.D2L.org](http://www.D2L.org)

ORSMA is available to provide training on the PSPs. Please contact Cindy Davis to discuss training options: [cdavis@oca.org](mailto:cdavis@oca.org)