

# Policy Coordinator's Report to the 2017 Archdiocesan Assembly

## Summary

To ensure the Archdiocese's full compliance with the OCA's Policies, Standards, and Procedures (PSP) on Sexual Misconduct, the Policy Coordinator position was created this year. The coordinator initiates, manages, and maintains the state and national background checks for all diocesan lay workers and volunteers that have contact with minors, as well as all readers, subdeacons, deacons, and priests. The position officially began on March 1. Since that time, the coordinator has worked with the chancellor and the Archdiocesan Council to establish a comprehensive system that governs this process. Full implementation, which begins with a letter to all parishes from His Eminence, begins on October 15. Applications may also be done in person at this year's Archdiocesan Assembly.

## Key Points

- The OCA currently contracts with an organization called Protect My Ministry (PMM).
- This automated system generally works well, but it breaks down for applicants living in Pennsylvania and therefore are subject to PA Act 153. The main problem with PMM is that applicants must create their own account with the state of Pennsylvania, and that for most users this account creation requires live, not simply automated, support.
- To meet the state's requirements the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania and Orthodox camping programs in PA end up foregoing electronic applications altogether and administer background checks by paper at their central offices, but our current staffing model does not allow for this kind of administration.
- Another issue with Protect My Ministry is that the Archdiocese is billed each time an application is submitted. The Archdiocese has determined that the parishes or volunteers themselves are responsible for the cost of the checks.
- Council therefore accepted the coordinator's recommendation to transition the diocese to Verified Volunteers (VV), an organization that specializes in personally guiding applicants through the creation of Pa. children check accounts and bills them directly.
- The user interface and backend has been completely customized for the Archdiocese. This allows us to track every applicant through the pipeline. The system also alerts the coordinator when renewals are necessary. This customization was completed on October 9.
- My role as coordinator is to focus on inviting and processing applicants, and providing regular reports on compliance rates to appropriate parties.
- The goal is to process 200 applicants by December 31, and have all staff and volunteers screened by 3Q 2018.
- VV charges \$20 per applicant and \$12 for each Pennsylvania Child Abuse Check. This is 25% higher than PMM, but VV is providing dedicated support for all applicants who need it.
- All that is needed to initiate the process is the applicant's name and email address. This information can be sent at any time to [policycoordinator@ocadwpa.org](mailto:policycoordinator@ocadwpa.org) or by calling (814) 321-4473.
- No sensitive information (Social Security Number, etc.) is communicated to the coordinator. The coordinator only sees the status of the background check.
- Please contact [policycoordinator@ocadwpa.org](mailto:policycoordinator@ocadwpa.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,  
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