

# Sexual Abuse Policy Coordinator's Report

Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania

January 22, 2021

## Summary:

It is a blessing for me to report that 100% of active clergy are current on their background checks. In addition, all tonsured readers who were properly referred to me have been verified and are eligible to serve. Many clergy are approaching the three-year mark since their last check and will receive a renewal invitation from Sterling Volunteers in 2021. Laity who plan to resume youth ministry will also receive background check invites in the coming weeks.

## Key Considerations:

- For classification purposes, I divide applicants into one of three tiers (or phases):
  - **Tier I** — Active clergy in Major Orders (including retired clergy who regularly serve as supply);
  - **Tier II** — Those set aside to serve in Minor Orders (subdeacons, readers, cantors, etc.); and
  - **Tier III** — Laity with direct contact with youth (teachers, altar server captains, etc.).
- As of January 22, 2021, the Archdiocese is in full compliance with everyone in **Tier I**. We also have 100% **Tier II** compliance for all parishes that successfully completed their 2020 Parish Information Update Form.
- The parishes that have not submitted 2020 PIU forms—where **Tier II** compliance cannot be confirmed—are **Altoona, Colver, and Irvona/Madera**.
- Because of the pandemic and the reality that most, if not all, of our church schools ceased in-person instruction, I delayed the processing of the **Tier III** background checks for teachers and youth workers until the beginning of this calendar year. Anticipating an eventual return to our ministries, I will have all the invites for the **Tier III** checks sent before the start of the Archdiocesan Assembly (that is, no later than February 22). I will also send each parish priest a report of their lay volunteers' status before the Assembly; and I will be available at the Assembly to answer your questions and run background checks on the spot.
- Our policy requires checks to be **renewed every three years**. More than half of Archdiocesan clergy are coming up for renewal in 2021. The good news is that your confidential information is already in the Sterling Volunteers (formerly Verified Volunteers) system and can be done immediately with your authorization. If you receive a renewal invitation and have forgotten your credentials, you can contact Sterling Volunteers at [theadvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com](mailto:theadvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com) or (855) 326-1860, option 1 to quickly log back in. When they ask for your organization, indicate you are from the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania.
- **I make every effort to remove obstacles that prevent 100% compliance.** Applicants without computers may call me at (814) 321-4473 to complete the process over the phone. This process takes less than 20 minutes.
- A common response I see on some PIU forms is that the free National Sex Offender search ([nsopw.gov](http://nsopw.gov)) or \$32 background check (when applicable) is not necessary because “my parish doesn't have any children.” If we want God to bless and add daily to our churches those who are being saved (*Acts 2:47*) it is essential that we perform our due diligence ahead of time! Don't expect your parish to grow if you are not in compliance.
- To collect statistical information for the Archdiocese to send in advance of Holy Synod meetings, I worked with Fr. Bill to design an updated PIU form that includes questions pertaining to the Policies, Standards, and Procedures (PSPs) of the OCA. These include (*percentages are valid as of January 22, 2021*):
  - Percent of Parishes that have formally adopted the PSP in the minutes of the Council (85%).
  - Percent of Parishes that have implemented the general supervision (76%) and two adult policy (87%).
  - Percent of Parishes that have given the PSP to each person required to receive it and have certified in written form their agreement to comply (84%).
- The Archdiocese is required by the Synod to conduct mandatory sexual abuse prevention training. I request that funds for said training be included in the 2021-2022 budget. I am happy to coordinate its scheduling.

Respectfully submitted,

Pdn. Alexander Cadman

[policycoordinator@ocadwpa.org](mailto:policycoordinator@ocadwpa.org)