

Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy Coordinator's Report

2022 Annual Assembly, Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania

Key Considerations:

- Even though many clergy were up to have their background checks renewed, having past in 2022 the three-year mark since their last review, one hundred percent (100%) of active clergy in the Major Orders remain current on their background checks.
- All those serving in the Minor Orders (subdeacons, readers, cantors, etc.) who were listed on the 2022 Parish Information Update Forms have been verified and have the status of "eligible."
- The above being true, processing renewal applications for lay volunteers on the parish level have proven difficult. I am currently partnering with parochial clergy to help me contact individuals who have not responded to multiple renewal background check invitations from Sterling Volunteers.
- Each parish priest receives an annual report indicating the background check status of each of the clergy, staff, and volunteers listed on their Parish Information Update Form. In the report's cover letter, I ask the priest to help me reach out directly to those who have not responded to the renewal invitations from Sterling Volunteers. Thank you for your cooperation, as it is simply not possible for me to contact your parishioners directly after multiple email reminders go unanswered.
- Clergy, staff, and volunteers can call or text me anytime at (814) 321-4473 to check on the status of background checks, have a check performed over the phone (it takes 5-10 minutes), or if you need to have a background check email invitation sent. I am also available to answer any questions you may have.
- A too-common response on PIU forms is that certain background checks or policies are 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 this due diligence *before* children arrive at our parishes! Don't expect your parish to grow if you are not in compliance.

Now Available: Free *Stewards of Children* Online Training Sponsored by the Archdiocese

This year, in response to the fact that zero percent (0%) of parishes were able to indicate that "Youth Worker Training" was accomplished on the Parish Information Update Forms (this is the percentage of all required individuals working with youth who have taken the mandatory sexual abuse prevention training every three years), the Archdiocese has partnered with the national nonprofit Stewards of Children to provide free online training for clergy, staff, and volunteers working with children.

The training takes approximately three hours to complete (it does not need to be done in one sitting) and uses a mix of survivor stories, expert advice, and practical guidance to help us all prevent child sexual abuse. To access the training, participants may use this self-registration link that has been created specifically for the Archdiocese:

<https://bit.ly/ocadwpa-training>

After accessing the link, enter your first and last name, your email address, and the city and state of your parish to begin the training. Please be advised that child sexual abuse is a tough topic. Some of the survivor stories in the online training modules may affect you and your fellow parishioners in a personal way. These stories reflect the personal experiences of actual survivors, and the experiences children face when they are sexually abused.

In addition to receiving certification from Stewards of Children, a National Resource Sheet is available in the resource section of the course with names and numbers of agencies that can help. The Darkness to Light helpline is also available at 1-866-FOR-LIGHT to assist you with the training or to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Alexander Cadman

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