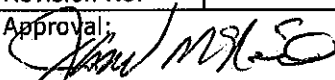




Alfred Street Baptist Church Background Check Policy for Volunteers

Document No.	HR-1
Effective Date	Jan 2013
Revision Date	
Revision No.	
Approval:	

Purpose

The Alfred Street Baptist Church (ASBC) is committed to vigilance during the screening and selection of volunteers. We endeavor to eliminate the likelihood that misconduct will occur.

The purpose of this policy is to establish protocols designed to: 1) safeguard vulnerable populations; 2) ensure efficient processing of background checks; and 3) maximize confidentiality of volunteer information.

Authority

The Alfred Street Baptist Church Board of Trustees, the fiduciary agent of the church, is responsible for this policy and reserves the right to revise or eliminate this policy as necessary. This policy supersedes all previous background check processes.

Policies

All prospective volunteers must be a member of ASBC and regularly involved in our church activities for at least ninety (90) days following receipt of the Right Hand of Fellowship before being considered for any ministry involving contact with vulnerable populations.

All individuals desiring to work with (or have contact with) vulnerable populations *on a regular basis* must undergo a personal interview and background check.

No one will be authorized to serve in a ministry involving contact with vulnerable populations unless s/he has received a background check "cleared" status, as determined by the Church Administrator. Special event volunteers will be the only exception.

There are no exceptions to the provisions of this policy.

An explanation of terms referenced in this policy and its attachments appears at the end of this document [see *Policy Definitions*].

Procedures

In order to screen prospective volunteers and disqualify those who pose a threat to vulnerable populations, ASBC will follow these procedures:

Step 1 – Personal Interview

A ministry representative conducts a personal interview with the prospective volunteer, ensuring s/he is an appropriate match for the role.

Step 2 – Application Submission

The prospective volunteer receives a background check application packet from the ministry representative, church reception desk, business office, or human resources. Application packets are also available electronically.

Each packet contains:

1. Background Check Policy for Volunteers
2. Code of Ethics for Volunteers with Vulnerable Populations
3. Application to Volunteer with Vulnerable Populations
4. Authorization for Release of Information

After reviewing all documents, if the prospective volunteer elects to continue the process, s/he completes and submits the required documents in a sealed envelope via mail or hand-delivery to the following address: Human Resources Manager, Alfred Street Baptist Church, 301 S. Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

These documents appear at the end of this policy [see *Attachments A, B, C*].

Step 3 – Background Check Conducted

The Human Resources Manager reviews the documents for completion and signatures, taking every precaution to protect the prospective volunteer's personal information while the background check request is processed.

Step 4 – Decision Rendered

The background check report is reviewed by the Human Resources Manager and Church Administrator prior to rendering a decision.

When a background check report indicates adverse information, it does not automatically disqualify an individual from volunteering. The Human Resources Manager and Church Administrator may ask to speak with the prospective volunteer for additional information, including a detailed written explanation and personal references. They may also speak with the law enforcement division that handled the case.

In the event that another opinion is required, the Church Administrator may ask for the recommendation of the Senior Leadership Committee and/or an opinion from the Church legal counsel. Regardless of the recommendation(s), the Church Administrator is responsible for rendering a final decision status of "cleared" or "not cleared."

Step 5– Notification of Decision

The Human Resources Manager notifies the prospective volunteer and the ministry representative of the resulting status, either "cleared" or "not cleared" to volunteer. Under no circumstance will the ministry be informed of the reason a prospective volunteer has received a "not cleared" status. Human Resources will only discuss background check results with the prospective volunteer.

Individuals receiving a "not cleared" status have a right to review their criminal history transcript by appointment with the Human Resources Manager. Transcript disputes may be filed by directly contacting the agency reporting criminal history.

Disqualification of Prospective Volunteers

In recognition of the increasing incidents of crimes against vulnerable populations, ASBC has determined that certain individuals may be disqualified from volunteering based on the unfavorable results of a criminal background check.

Without in any way limiting those offenses that ASBC may deem as disqualifying offenses, the following examples are offered as guidelines:

1. An offense against a person or family. Offenses against a person include, but are not limited to, murder, robbery, assault, sexual assault, stalking, and abandoning or endangering a child. Included are crimes against children and/or seniors for neglect, abuse, etc.
2. Offenses against the family include, but are not limited to bigamy, incest, interference with child custody, enticing a child, harboring a runaway child, and domestic assault.
3. An offense classified as sexual assault, including but not limited to, rape, sexual battery, aggravated sexual battery, carnal knowledge of a minor, indecency with a child, offenses requiring registration as a sex offender, injury to a child, abandoning or endangering a child, possession or distribution of child pornography, enticing a child, bigamy or incest.
4. Crimes involving moral turpitude such as thievery, fraud and embezzlement.
5. An offense against public order and decency including, but not limited to prostitution, obscenity, sexual performance by a child, possession or distribution of child pornography, disorderly conduct, and indecent exposure.
6. A violation of any law intended to control the possession or distribution of any substance included as a controlled substance.
7. A DUI, DWI or any other offense involving illegal substances, when the prospective volunteer will be driving as part of a ministry activity.
8. Any offense involving participation in a street gang.

If a background check reveals any other conviction, arrest or violation of the law, ASBC reserves the right to disqualify the prospective volunteer from any or all activities involving vulnerable populations.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The personal identifiable information submitted on background check forms will be used solely for the purpose of obtaining background checks.

Access to Confidential Information

ASBC will treat all personal and criminal history as confidential, and will limit the number of people who have access to the application, information release authorization, and criminal record transcripts. Only the pastor, church administrator,

legal counsel, and human resources manager are authorized to review the criminal record transcripts.

Information Storage and Dissemination

Any and all written documentation provided for background checks will be received on the premises of ASBC and will not be taken from the premises. Such documentation will be indefinitely secured and archived electronically.

Compliance with State and Federal Regulations

Freedom of Information Act

ASBC **shall** comply with the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, including the destruction of criminal history record information obtained, promptly after determination of the suitability of the individual for a position as a volunteer.

Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act

As required by law, ASBC **shall** include the most recent version of the Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, along with the background check report given to prospective volunteers.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

Volunteers **shall** promptly notify their ministry leader when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.

Ministry leaders who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove volunteers from their positions.

Annual Review

Each year, ASBC **shall** conduct a review meeting. At that time, the procedures mandated by this policy will be reviewed with all volunteers, ministry leaders, church staff and leadership.

All employees and volunteers working in any capacity with vulnerable populations will complete a brief renewal application annually.

Should the renewal application indicate that any employees or volunteers have become unsuitable for working with vulnerable populations, they will be removed immediately from their current position.

Revision of Policy and Procedures

The leadership of ASBC, with the assistance of legal counsel, will regularly review this policy and the procedures established within it. If necessary, the policies and procedures will be modified in accordance with the church bylaws. When changes are made, the leadership will communicate them to all volunteers and employees affected by the policy changes.

**Policy
Definitions**

Authorization: Written permission from the prospective volunteer for the background check to be conducted

Background check or background investigation: An opt-in screening process that gathers information about a prospective volunteer's criminal history; sources including but not limited to personal references, local/state/national/federal criminal reports, sex offender registries, and vehicle driving records and/or accident reports

Children and Youth: Person under 18 years of age

Cleared: Status designated to prospective volunteers authorized to serve ministries catering to vulnerable populations

Conviction: The result of a criminal trial which ends in a judgment or sentence that the accused is guilty as charged

Disabled: Person having a physical or mental impairment

Elderly: Person above 70 years of age

Felony: A crime of a graver or more serious nature than those designated as misdemeanors **which is punishable for one year in prison or more.**

Misdemeanor: Offenses **which are punishable up to one year of incarceration** and generally those punishable by fine, penalty, forfeiture or imprisonment otherwise than in penitentiary

Not cleared: Status designated to prospective volunteers unauthorized to serve ministries catering to vulnerable populations

Prospective volunteer: Person seeking to serve unpaid in a ministry, program or event catering to vulnerable populations

Senior Leadership Committee: Pastor, Chair of Deacons Board, Chair of Trustees Board, and Church Administrator

Vulnerable populations: Children, youth, elderly, and the disabled

Attachments (A, B, C) to Background Check Policy

- A. Code of Ethics for Volunteers with Vulnerable Populations
 - B. Application to Volunteer with Vulnerable Populations
 - C. Authorization for Release of Information
-

DISTRIBUTION: Policy File; Pastor; Chair, Board of Deacons; Chair, Board of Trustees; Church Administrator; Ministry Program Manager; Human Resources Manager; and Child/Youth Ministry Directors.

Attachment A: Code of Ethics for Volunteers with Vulnerable Populations

This Code of Ethics must be submitted along with the *Application to Volunteer with Vulnerable Populations and Authorization for Release of Information* to:
Human Resources Manager, Alfred Street Baptist Church, 301 S. Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

While serving as an ASBC volunteer, I WILL NOT:

1. Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs.
2. Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or intoxicating beverages.
3. Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children/youth/seniors.
4. Use profanity and other inappropriate language.
5. Mistreat or neglect others: physical abuse, verbal abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, and sexual abuse including inappropriate touching and exposure.

While serving as an ASBC volunteer, I WILL:

1. Treat everyone of all races, religions, cultures, and learning abilities with respect and consideration.
2. Abstain from humiliating or frightening discipline techniques.
3. Be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect others' health, including, but not limited to fever or contagious conditions.
4. Portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
5. Do everything in my power to avoid being put in a situation where I am alone with a child other than my own.
6. Report any suspected abuse or neglect immediately to the Church Administrator and/or Human Resources. If someone is in imminent danger, call 911.

I understand that as a prospective ASBC volunteer, I will be subject to a criminal background check.

I understand that allegations or suspicions of abuse are taken very seriously by ASBC and will be reported to the authorities for investigation. ASBC will fully cooperate with any related investigations and will pursue the prosecution of abusers to its fullest extent under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I understand that any violation of this Code may be grounds for removal as a volunteer. Being fully aware of the matters contained in the Code of Ethics, I still desire consideration as a volunteer.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Email

Primary Phone #

Secondary Phone #

Ministry Name

Ministry Representative Name

Date

Email

Primary Phone #

Secondary Phone #

Attachment B: Application to Volunteer with Vulnerable Populations

This application must be submitted along with the *Code of Ethics for Volunteers with Vulnerable Populations*
and *Authorization for Release of Information* to:
Human Resources Manager, Alfred Street Baptist Church, 301 S. Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Name _____

Address _____

Primary Phone # _____ Secondary Phone # _____

Email _____

List the ministry or ministries in which you would like to become involved.

Please share any special talents, skills, or relevant prior experience.

Are you a member of ASBC? Yes No

Have you at any time ever:	YES	NO
1. Been arrested for any reason?		
2. Been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any crime?		
3. Engaged in, or been accused of, molestation, exploitation, or neglect or abuse of a child, disabled or elderly person?		
Are you currently:		
4. On trial or awaiting a trial on any criminal charges?		
5. Awaiting sentencing for any criminal offense?		
6. On probation for any criminal offense?		
Are you aware of:		
7. Having any traits or tendencies that could pose a threat to a child, disabled or elderly person?		
8. Any reason why you should not work with children, disabled or elderly persons?		
If you answered "yes" to any question in this box, please explain in detail:		

REFERENCES (other than relatives)

Please provide at least two character references.

Name	Relationship	Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

I recognize that Alfred Street Baptist Church (ASBC) is relying on the accuracy of the information I provide on the Volunteer Application. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that the information I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I understand and agree that providing false and misleading information on this application is grounds for my immediate dismissal, if I am selected as a volunteer.

I authorize ASBC to contact any person or entity listed on the Volunteer Application, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide the church with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release the organization and any such person or entity listed on the Volunteer Application from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize the church to conduct a criminal background investigation if such a check is deemed necessary.

I have carefully read and understand the ASBC Background Check Policy and Code of Ethics. I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of vulnerable populations assigned to my care or supervision at all times.

I agree to notify the ASBC Human Resources office within 5 business days of being charged with a criminal offense.

Signature
(Please read this before you sign it.)

Printed Name

Date

HR Use only:

Attached Code of Ethics Yes No

Attached Authorization for Release of Information Yes No

Results received ____/____/____ Prospective Volunteer / Ministry Notified ____/____/____



Authorization For Release of Information

Organization: Alfred Street Baptist Church

KEEPING YOUR FUTURE IN GOOD COMPANY

Participant/Employee

Form fields for personal information: First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, Maiden or Other Names Formally Used, Date Last Used, Month, Year, Do you have a valid Driver's License?, Drivers License Number, State, Yes/No, Current Address, City, County, State, Zip, Social Security Number.

Section titled 'Previous Residences: List all other cities/counties where you have lived in the last 7 years.' with multiple rows for City, County, State, Zip, From Date, To Date, Month, Year.

Form fields for Date of Birth, Race, Sex, and Telephone.



Authorization For Release of Information

Organization: **Alfred Street Baptist Church**

KEEPING YOUR FUTURE IN GOOD COMPANY

Participant Consent and Release Form

Proforma Screening Solutions, a consumer reporting agency, will be obtaining information to be compiled into a consumer report and/or investigative consumer report. This information may include information about your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and/or mode of living.

This information may be obtained from educational institutions, government agencies, companies, corporations, law enforcement agencies and the federal, state or county level, former employers and military institutions. I specifically authorize that this information may be sought and agree to release from any liability the agencies, prior employers, individuals or other entities which provide the information to the extent that the information given is true and accurate. I understand that some or all of this information may be transmitted electronically and authorize such transmission.

I understand that the information obtained may be used by Client in its sole discretion and without liability to determine eligibility for participation in client sponsored activities, to grant or deny me permission to enter onto client property, or that of its affiliated partners.

I certify that all statements and answers set forth on the application and authorization form are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and I understand that if subsequent to approval for participation, any such statements and/or answers are found false or information has been omitted, such false statements or omissions will be just cause for termination of my volunteering. Further by requesting this information no promise of participation is being made.

I consent to the release of consumer and/or investigative consumer reports to Client.

I understand that a photocopy of this authorization is to be accepted with the same authority as the original.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand this information, and the rules governing its collection and use, as pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, amended by the Consumer Reform Act of 1996, and that any adverse action based on this information will be communicated to me in accordance with the Act.

I have carefully read and understand the authorization form. By my signature, I agree with all information contained in the above form.

Signature _____

Date Signed _____

Printed Name _____



Authorization For Release of Information

Organization: Alfred Street Baptist Church

KEEPING YOUR FUTURE IN GOOD COMPANY

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Within the past seven- (7) years have you been convicted of a crime which has not been expunged from your record or received an alternative disposition sentence for a criminal act? Include offenses for which you served probation, paid a fine and/or served a jail sentence.

Yes No

If yes, please explain the circumstances of the conviction(s) including the date, nature, place of the offense, disposition, and any other information you may want to bring to our attention.

2. Are you currently on probation or parole for a criminal offense? Yes No

If yes, please explain.