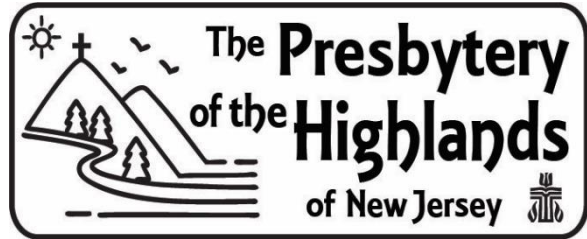


*The community of faith
should be a place of trust
and safety for all Members.*



The Criminal Background Check Policy first goal is to protect our churches, the presbytery, members and provide confidence and security, especially for the most vulnerable.

The policy facilitates Pastor Nominating Committees, The Committee on Ministry and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to make informed decisions about those seeking membership in the Presbytery, and for Inquirers and Candidates. The policy also seeks to mitigate the risk of lawsuits based on inadequate pre-employment screening.

Policy

The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey Criminal Background Check Policy:

- Criminal background checks are required for the following:
 - All minister members of the Presbytery, Certified Christian Educators and Commissioned Ruling Elders
 - All persons seeking to become members of the presbytery either by a transfer of membership from another presbytery or denomination, or by ordination to a call within the presbytery. A background check shall be completed before a transfer is finalized
 - All persons seeking to become, a Commissioned Ruling Elder, an Inquirer or to move to the status of Candidate, if not previously checked. Background check shall be completed within 30 days of meeting with the CPM.
 - All Presbytery Staff in compliance with the Presbytery Personnel Policy.
 - All employees, officers, and volunteers who work with children or adolescents in conjunction with a presbytery-sponsored activity in compliance with the Presbytery's Child Protection Policy.
- Prior written permission will be obtained from the person to be checked for the Presbytery of the Highlands to do a criminal background check.

- Any person being checked will be notified of the outcome of the criminal background check.
- Criminal background checks will consist of a database search, a search of sexual offender registries of all states in which the person has resided for the past ten years and a search for felony records at the county courthouse for the place(s) of residence during the past two years.
- The Stated Clerk of the presbytery is authorized to conduct the background checks and to maintain a secure record of all persons checked. If a background check identifies a criminal offense, the person involved shall be notified of the report and invited to respond in writing to the results of the search within 30 days. The person involved may also request a meeting with the Stated Clerk, the Presbytery Leader, and the moderators of the Committee on Ministry and/or the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. After reviewing the written response and information obtained through any meeting, the team will initiate whatever steps are necessary to ensure the integrity of the witness to the Gospel in our community.
- All congregations, fellowship groups and New Church Developments, of the presbytery are required to adopt a Child and Youth Protection Policy and Sexual Misconduct policy that includes a provision for criminal background checks.
- The Presbytery through the shall bear the expense of the background check for required to by this policy.

The Background Check Service

The Presbytery has contracted with an investigative firm, National Background Investigations, Inc., (NBI) of Stevensville, Maryland to perform the checks. NBI checks county court records for arrests and convictions in the past seven years and the sex offender registry.

The background check will be conducted as required by the policy. Those listed in the policy will sign a release form, the completed and signed original copy will be sent to the Presbytery office, attention: Stated Clerk. Upon receipt of the completed form a background check will be requested from NBI.

Information

The report will be reviewed, and the contents communicated to the appropriate party. Any report that does identify criminal offense will be further reviewed by the Stated Clerk following the policy listed above.

The reports will be kept confidential and are kept digitally offsite through the security company.