

Background checks for local, regional and national youth ministry: Creating a safe environment for our children and teens.

At the Association of Unity Churches International we strongly suggest and encourage individual Unity ministries to conduct background screening on all adults - either paid staff or volunteers – working with minors.

Youth and family ministry provides high risk opportunities for adults to be alone with a child or teen during church hours and off-site activities. Background screening provides the church with information that may safeguard our children, our adult volunteers and the church. Screening will not eliminate risk altogether but does show that the church has acted in good faith to place appropriate adults in responsible positions.

A background screening would include:

- an application on file
- documentation that personal references given on the application have been checked
- a face-to-face interview with the applicant
- a criminal background screen

We suggest churches use a professional background screening company or the local police department. Background screenings should include a national criminal search. Driving background should be mandatory for those individuals who will be transporting minors.

All reports are to be considered confidential and stored in a locked area with limited access. Only the minister/and or another staff member (perhaps youth ministry director) should have access.

Due to the structure of the Association of Unity Churches International, each church is responsible for creating and implementing risk management procedures such as the above. This not only safeguards your children but also those of other Unity ministries with which you interact.

For more information on risk management, please refer to the Youth and Family Ministry Guide (available through the Association), Chapter 16, or go to our website <http://www.unity.org/education/adult-srv-yth.html>.

If you have questions about who should be screened, contact the Children's or Teen Coordinator at the Association of Unity Churches International. If you need suggestions about professional screening companies, please contact Cathy Christy at the Association office, 816.524.7414.