

Background Checks

CFC SAFETY POLICY NOTE: Access Background Checks Application at

<http://www.tnumc.org> to receive pricing discounts through the TN Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church website (from their homepage: search “background check”. FOR HELP call UMC TN Conference Phone: 615-695-2760



STEP 1. Becoming familiar with background checking

The TN UMC and Group’s Shepherd’s Watch are working together to enable ministries to operate in a safe and secure environment. The conference’s number-one priority is helping churches, related ministries, and agencies protect the people their ministries seek to serve.

This online service provides access to the information needed to make an informed hiring or volunteer placement decision. Through the use of Shepherd’s Watch’s screening service, churches, related ministries, and agencies can responsibly manage hiring and volunteer placement and, as a result, reduce the possibility that a child, youth or vulnerable adult will be exposed to harm.

When people are harmed by those working on behalf of our church they often lose faith in the church community and resources for ministry are diverted to costly litigation. Background screening is a reliable tool in fulfilling expectations for responsible hiring and volunteer placement and for preserving faith communities and ministry resources. Now churches and church-related agencies can obtain comprehensive background checks without incurring extensive charges. For as low as \$9.00 per person, and no set up fee, churches will have the availability to run a report of the National Criminal Indicator Database Search that includes a search of the Dept. of Public Safety, Dept. of Corrections, and Administrative Office of the Courts, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Sexual Offenders Registry, and the Dept. of Criminal Justice files and records, where available. It also includes Social Security Verification, which confirms the applicant’s name, date number issued and state, as well as address history.

Shepherd’s Watch also offers the following benefits to the churches of the Tennessee Conference:

- Free activation to Shepherd’s Watch background checking service – currently a \$19.99 value
- Two free “Package 1 – Basic Starter” background checks – for each UMC church newly activated. An \$18.00 value
- Compliant Background Check reports consistent with the FCRA guidelines - data, customized forms, and regulatory updates are compliant with the Fair Credit Reporting Act
- Efficient on-boarding to Sterling Infosystems platform and delivery system - within 42-78 hours of receipt of User Agreement
- No minimum orders required
- No monthly billing or usage fees
- Church invoicing on all orders - 30 days term
- Automation of the data entry for volunteer screening - Volunteers can submit their own information and e-sign the compliant release avoiding unnecessary personal data exposure.
- Dedicated account and customer service representatives – from both the Sterling staff and Shepherd’s Watch team
- No hidden fees - all packages are flat rate pricing

> Proceed to STEP 2, Getting started - [CLICK HERE](#)

Step 2: Getting started



STEP 2, Getting started | To get started with ordering background checks, you'll need to first set-up an account with Sterling Infosystems, the background check provider for Shepherd's Watch. This is a one-time process, and can be completed in three simple steps:

Note: Several forms require the free Adobe Reader. Download Adobe Reader ([Windows](#) | [Mac](#)) if it is not already installed on your computer.

STEP 1: Download the [Fax Cover Sheet \(.PDF\)](#) and [User Agreement \(.PDF\)](#). Complete and print the Agreement and sign where indicated.

STEP 2: Fax the cover sheet and User Agreement to Sterling Infosystems at 800.355.7941. Or scan and email to: ShepherdsWatch@SterlingInfosystems.com

STEP 3: Once the activation process is finalized (2-3 days), your church will receive a welcome email from Sterling which will provide your login credentials, an instruction manual to walk you through the order process, and an invitation to attend an optional webinar training session. You can also schedule your own personalized training if you feel that would be more helpful. Again, you only need to go through these steps only once to establish an account with Sterling Infosystems.

> Proceed to STEP 3, Ordering your background check - [CLICK HERE](#)

Step 3: Ordering your background checks



STEP 3, Ordering your background checks | Once your account is established, getting background checks is as easy as:

STEP 1: Have each of your applicants/volunteers sign the [Permission to Obtain a Background Check form \(PDF\)](#). Or for your convenience you can electronically send a request to the applicant and they will provide their consent online, along with their information. If you chose to enter the order yourself, use the information provided from the consent form. If using the paper consent, keep it on file for a minimum of seven years to verify the approval. (Your state may require a different of time so check with local counsel.)

STEP 2: Select the appropriate screening package from the options listed on the online order form. To see a listing of the 13 different screening package options, please see those below.

STEP 3: [CLICK HERE](#) to login and place the order. Login with the credentials provided by Sterling.

Shepherd's Watch Provides You with 13 Package Options:

> Jump to: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#) - [6](#) - [7](#) - [8](#) - [9](#) - [10](#) - [11](#) - [12](#) - [13](#)

Package 1 – Basic Starter (\$9.00 per search)

The National Criminal Indicator Database Search comprises a search of the Dept. of Public Safety, Dept. of Corrections, and Administrative Office of the Courts, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Sexual Offenders Registry, and the Dept. of Criminal Justice files and records, where available. Includes Social Security Verification, which provides the name, date issued and state, as well as address history.

Package 2 - Basic Plus (\$23.00 per search)

Includes all of Package 1, plus one County Criminal Records Search. This search will be conducted onsite in the selected county, and the price includes the court access fees except in the state of New York, which adds an additional \$65.00. Additional counties may be added for \$14 each (plus the additional access fee in the state of New York).

APPENDIX 8

Package 3 - Vehicle Plus (\$23.00 per search)*

Includes all of Package 1, plus a Motor Vehicle Report, from the state in which the applicant is licensed. Depending upon the state, this may provide information such as dates of convictions, violations and accidents, sections violated, docket numbers, court locations and accident report numbers.

Package 4 - All-Inclusive (\$36.00 per search)*

Includes all of Packages 1, 2, and 3: the National Criminal Indicator Database Search, Social Security Verification, one County Criminal Search (\$65 additional in the state of New York), and one state Motor Vehicle Report. Additional counties may be added for \$14 each (plus the additional access fee in the state of New York).

Package 5 – Motor Vehicle Record (\$15.00 per search)*

Includes a Motor Vehicle Report from the state where the applicant is licensed.

Package 6 – National Criminal File Only (\$8.00 per search)

National Criminal Indicator search and State Sex Offender Registry only. Does not contain the Social Security Verification.

Package 7 – Social Security Verification (\$3.00 per search)

Additional Social Security verification—same person. You can do social security verification of alias names of the individual being checked through the National Criminal Indicator Database for \$3.00 per alias.

Package 8 – Credit Report (\$10.00 per search)

Credit Plus (Normalized) Credit Report. Credit Plus is a normalized credit report that converts most cryptic information into a more

readable report. Pulling a credit report for volunteer/employment purposes does NOT affect the consumer's credit report or score. To do this check, you will need the applicant's signature on another consent form. Also, member churches that want to do credit reports must file a Consumer Report Addendum with Sterling and allow a one-time site inspection to verify that credit reports can be secure as required by law. This site inspection is required by all 3 credit bureaus and the full \$85 one-time fee is received by the company performing the site inspection. Contact Sterling at 888-889-5248 to get set-up to order this report.

Package 9 – Federal Criminal Court Search (\$14.00 per search)

This is a criminal records search conducted at a single U.S. District Court within a federal judicial district. U.S. District Courts are trial courts for matters involving federal law. These are cases that involve the government, a violation of the constitution, or a controversy that crosses state lines. Criminal cases landing in federal court are initiated by the government through a U.S. attorney, in coordination with a federal law enforcement agency and with the acceptance by the grand jury. Federal crimes are not registered in the state criminal records search that comprises our basic packages 1-4. While federal crimes are more rare, they are also more significant.

Package 10 – Patriot Act Scan (\$5.00 per search)

The Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") of the U.S. Department of the Treasury administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on US foreign policy and national security goals against targeted foreign countries, terrorists, international narcotics traffickers, and those engaged in activities related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Package 11 – Education Verification (\$15.00 per search)

Education Verification. If the position requires that applicants have a certain level of education, you should search for the highest level required. This search will verify with the educational institution you specify what the applicant's attendance dates were with that institution, and any degrees earned.

Package 12 – Previous Employment Verification (\$15.00 per search)

Previous Employment Verification. This search will verify with the organization you specify whether the applicant was employed by them, the dates, and the applicant's title.

Package 13 – Abuse Registry (\$10.00 per search)

Provides reported cases of child and/or adult neglect or abuse as documented by the Department of Health and Human Services. Available in certain states based on state specific regulations.

**The state of California requires organizations requesting Motor Vehicle Reports to register as commercial requesters and pay a fee. Visit the California Department of Motor Vehicles website for their current information.*

> Proceed to STEP 4, Authorization and completion - [CLICK HERE](#)

Step 4: Authorization and completion



STEP 4, Authorization and completion | Fair Credit Reporting Act Requirements on Background Checks

Background checks must be conducted in compliance with the [Fair Credit Reporting Act \(FCRA, .PDF download\)](#). One of the requirements is that each applicant must complete and sign a form authorizing you to obtain a background report. Your church must retain a signed copy of that form for at least five years after requesting a report.

If your church decides to deny an applicant opportunity based on information contained in their background report, the FCRA also requires that you provide the applicant with the following information:

1. A copy of their background report and a Consumer Summary. Included within the applicant's background report is a summary of their rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (called a "Consumer Summary"). [DOWNLOAD \(.PDF\)](#) additional copies of the Consumer Summary.
2. 5-Day Letter – Five day's advance notice of your church's intention to deny opportunity to the applicant and contact information for Sterling so that the applicant may dispute information contained within their report. [View a sample 5-Day letter \(.PDF\)](#).
3. Notice of Adverse Action – Final notice of your church's decision to deny opportunity to the applicant and contact information for Sterling so that the applicant may dispute information contained within their report. [View a sample Notice of Adverse Action letter \(.PDF\)](#).

For questions regarding Shepherd's Watch background checks contact:

Email: ShepherdsWatch@group.com

Shepherd's Watch: 877.446.3247

Sterling Infosystems: 888.889.5248, #6316 (Client code)

