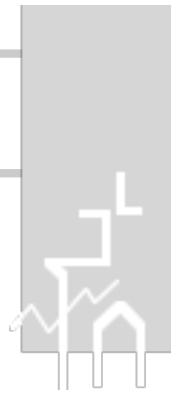


RISK REDUCTION: SCREENING



1. Create and implement personnel **policy** and **procedure manual** which applies to all church staff, even the volunteers. Church manual should provide details for a screening procedure which keeps confidential any information on a screening application, requires reference checks, and keeps to a minimum those overseeing the screening process. The manual should also include written disciplinary policy, which includes sexual harassment.
2. Create a screening **application form** for all employees and volunteers, particularly those who work with children and youth and/or are new to the community. This application should include:
 - name, current address and phone
 - preferred area of work with children/youth/adults
 - date available and minimum commitment
 - any limitations (physical, emotional, etc.) for this kind of work (*not* okay to ask a potential employee)
 - full explanation of any prior criminal convictions
 - church membership and volunteer history for past five years, including any church youth work
 - special gifts or training to prepare for this work
 - two references (not employers or relatives), including address and phone
 - authorization to call references
 - an affirmation that the information is correct
 - an affirmation to follow the constitution, bylaws and policies of the church
 - employment record (in less detail for volunteers)(If someone under 18 is filling out the form, a parent or guardian should also sign.)
3. Always contact **references**, using a reference response form for every reference contacted. The *confidential* form should indicate whether the contact was on the phone or in writing and summarize the communication. Form also should include the date and person making the contact as well as the person contacted. (Contact each church in which the applicant has indicated prior experience working with youth.)
4. Review the **criminal record** by at least checking Megan's Law registry (paid staff's fingerprints should be screened through CA Department of Justice). If there is a record of child abuse, ask that volunteer to take assignments other than those involving children and youth, even if they have experienced a conversion, therapeutic recovery or a change of heart. (Remember that only 3% of predators have criminal records.)
5. Ask volunteers for youth activities to first conclude six months of membership in their church prior to accepting a volunteer position.
6. Applicants who are unknown should provide a photo identification, such as a driver's license, since offenders are known to use pseudonyms.
7. Maintain confidential personnel files for your employees and document all significant matters, including reprimands.