

March 3, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our Institute, in compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* adopted by the National Conference of the Catholic Bishops of America, instituted a policy requiring background checks for all priests, deacons, celibate lay members and married members in our Institute. At our annual Congress this past August, according to those same guidelines, it was proposed and subsequently approved that these background checks and certifications, where applicable, should be renewed every five (5) years. As a person serving within the Voluntas Dei Institute, USA it is most important that you comply with this requirement for renewal of the information in your file. Should you have completed a background check previously for another diocese other than the Voluntas Dei Institute, USA, or for any agency or employment, you are still required to complete an updated one at this time.

For all members of the Institute, enclosed please find the following:

A *General Information Sheet* which provides information regarding the background checks. On the back side of the Information Sheet is found the *Disclosure/Authorization Form* that must be completed fully, providing all requested information including your social security number. Completed forms and signatures must be originals; facsimiles are not acceptable.

A *Code of Conduct with Minors* form which every member must assent to and acknowledge by an original signature.

In addition, **all clergy members** (priests and deacons) of the Institute must return a copy of their recently completed certification of attendance at a *Virtus* or equivalent program of training – dated **after** January 1, 2016. Like the Background Checks and the Code of Conduct, a *Virtus* training program or equivalent must be renewed every five years.

Lastly, if the particular requirements of the diocese where you minister require fingerprinting, each priest or deacon should also return a copy of the successful outcome of that search to us. Please note: If responding by mail, completed *Disclosure/Authorization Forms* and *Code of Conduct with Minor Forms* should be returned to the Institute Coordinator by June 1, 2017.

I am most appreciative of your cooperation as our Institute carries out this vitally important process. Also, be assured any information you furnish or which comes from this process will be held in strictest confidence. Thank you for your service to our Church and to our Institute.

Sincerely in Christ,

Anthony J. Ciorra
District Director

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING BACKGROUND SCREENING WITHIN THE VOLUNTAS DEI, INSTITUTE, USA

Who will conduct the background screening?

The Institute will use a confidential process for conducting the criminal background and sexual offender checks provided by **First Advantage Background Services Corp.** P.O. Box 105292 Atlanta, GA 30348 1-800-845-6004. These programs are specifically designed by “First Advantage” for eligible non-profit social service organizations to screen their members. This company is a well-established leader in the field of employment screening serving the corporate and private business sector. “First Advantage” screening is accomplished electronically and does not require fingerprinting.

How will the background screening be conducted?

The process for the background checks is as follows:

- The individual completes the authorization form allowing the Institute to conduct a criminal and sexual offender background check and provides his/her date of birth and social security number.
- The Institute Coordinator will see that the relevant information provided on the Authorization Form is entered into a web-based application.
- The signed Authorization Form will be maintained by the Institute.
- ChoicePoint, upon electronic receipt of the application, processes the request. The databases checked are a verification of the Social Security Number, criminal databases in states nationwide where available (what “First Advantage” refers to as its “National Criminal File”), and a sex offender search.
- There is no search involving personal financial or banking business, credit history or civil legal actions.
- Upon completion of the search and receipt of the report should there be any issues of concern an Institute representative will contact you and provide you with a copy of the background check report.

What happens if the Background Report contains negative information?

Should anything negative be contained in the report of these searches the member will be immediately contacted. In each case, the information provided by the report will be evaluated to determine the nature and severity of the reported issues. Such evaluations will be accomplished in consultation with the individual and if indicated an appropriate professional consultant. Concern for the well-being of the person, as well as his/her legal and canonical rights, balanced by the responsibility of the Institute to the “Local Church,” will be a priority with regard to any evaluation and resulting decision.

**CLERGY, LAY MEMBER BACKGROUND CHECK
DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION FORM**

DISCLOSURE

This Disclosure and Authorization is provided pursuant to the federal and New Jersey Fair Credit Reporting Acts. This is to inform you that a consumer report is being obtained from a consumer-reporting agency (i.e., **First Advantage Background Services Corp.**) on behalf of the Voluntas Dei Institute, USA. This report is for the purpose of evaluating your suitability for service within the Institute according to the norms set forth in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* adopted by the National Conference of the Catholic Bishops of America. This report may contain information bearing on your character, general reputation and personal characteristics from public and private record sources.

Upon completion of this background check, should any concerns surface, you will be advised of those concerns. Also, this report will be accomplished in strict confidence and with absolute commitment to your right to privacy and attention to your legal and canonical rights.

AUTHORIZATION

To Whom It May Concern:

I, _____, hereby authorize **First Advantage Background Services Corp.** on behalf of the Voluntas Dei Institute, USA to procure a consumer report (known also as an investigative consumer report). I understand this report will encompass a National Criminal File Search comprised of a comprehensive search of multiple criminal record sources, including state and county criminal record repositories, "First Advantage" proprietary record information, prison, parole, and release files and records from other state agencies. This report will also include a State Sexual Offender Search that comprises a search of state sexual offender registrations. I understand that I may request a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of this background investigation to the extent such investigation includes information bearing on my character, general reputation, and personal characteristics.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

_____/_____/_____
Social Security Number

Street Address

Date of Birth

City/State/Zip Code

Parish (Name)

Telephone Number

(City/State)

Please check one: Clergy

Lay Member _____
(Stage of membership)

Please check box, and dates and sign:

I hereby acknowledge that on: (Date) _____, I participated in Safe Environment Training as provided by the Voluntas Dei Institute, USA.

I hereby acknowledge that on: (Date) _____, I have received a copy of the Policy on Sexual Misconduct of the Voluntas Dei Institute, USA, that I have read the Policy, understand its meaning, and agree to conduct myself in accord with the Policy and as the Policy may be amended in the future. I also understand that this acknowledgement will be kept on file by the Voluntas Dei Institute, USA.

Signature

(With exception of signatures, please print all information clearly)