

BACKGROUND CHECKS

“CORI” Background Check Frequently Asked Questions

What is a CORI?

A CORI is a check for Criminal Offender Record Information.

Why does our Diocese use a CORI process?

Background checks are one of the mandates of the USCCB (United States Catholic Conference of Bishops) Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth. CORI checks are mandated in the Diocese of Springfield’s Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth. In addition, Massachusetts state law requires CORI checks for employees of programs that serve children (M.G.L., Chapter 6). State law was expanded in November 2002 to include:

- Employees and volunteers providing services to elderly or disabled persons in a home or community-based setting (Section 172C);
- Employees and volunteers at camps for youth under 18 (Section 172G);
- Volunteers at programs primarily providing activities or programs for youth under 18 (Section 172H).

What is the purpose of the CORI check?

The CORI check is one of the ways in which the Diocese is working to establish a safe environment for our youth. The intent is to ensure that those who work with children and other vulnerable groups do not pose a risk to others. It is important to remember that predators share information on how to access youth-oriented organizations, and background checks can be a powerful deterrent to sex offenders.

For whom is the CORI check requested?

CORI checks are completed for:

- All Diocese and parish employees;
- All clergy, religious and deacons;
- All current and prospective employees and volunteers who have or will have unsupervised contact with children and young people;
- All current and prospective employees and volunteers providing services to elderly or disabled people in their homes or in community-based settings.

Based on the work or volunteer ministry a person does within a parish, those who generally need a background check include (but are not limited to) catechists, teachers, Eucharistic ministers, altar server coordinators, music ministers, volunteers at a parish picnic or carnival, counselors, chaperones, youth group leaders, coaches and assistants.

How often are CORI checks conducted?

Every three years. Those who begin work between these 3-year cycles will be CORI'ed upon employment, and again at the 3-year intervals of 2006, 2009, 2012, etc.

Who else does background checks?

Every U.S. Roman Catholic Diocese and Eparchy is required to do background checks. In addition, background checks are frequently required by youth-serving organizations -- Scouts, youth soccer leagues and Little League baseball, for example. Following the model established by the Catholic Church, many other religious groups now do background checks as well.

What information does a CORI request?

The CORI request provides access to conviction and pending court activity data. CORI applies only to crimes punishable by incarceration. It does not include civil matters, acquittals, or accusations that were dismissed. The intent is not to cause harm or public embarrassment to people for past mistakes that they have already been punished for.

How is CORI information requested?

Individuals fill out the "CORI Request Form" and attach a photocopy of current government-issued photo identification. The forms are submitted to the Diocesan Human Resources Office, which submits them to the Criminal History Systems Board for processing.

Why do I need to submit a photo ID issued by the government?

This is a federal requirement. Some people are reluctant to use a driver's license because the ID number is the same as the Social Security number. You can have this changed to a random, state-issued ID number at any full-service RMV office.

Who receives and reads the results of the CORI check?

A person authorized under the CORI Act and certified by the Criminal History Systems Board receives and reads the results. The Criminal History Systems Board has authorized Catherine Farr (Director of the Diocese Human Resources Office) to review CORI information. CORI results may be shared with the applicant to whom it pertains.

What will happen if there is an offense on record?

The Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB) has developed a list of offenses considered "Lifetime Disqualifications." People with these offenses are disqualified from working or volunteering with minors. For other offenses, the Diocese follows CHSB guidelines. The circumstances of each offense are considered, including the type of offense, severity of offense, length of time since the offense, a single incident versus multiple occurrences, and the age of the person when an offense was committed. The Human Resources Director will consult with the pastor about the course of action to follow.

Is the CORI confidential?

Yes. Dissemination of CORI results to any unauthorized party may subject the offending agency or individual to a fine of \$5,000 and/or up to one year in jail, in addition to other

civil penalties. CORIs are secured in a locked file at the Diocesan Human Resources Office and kept separate from personnel files. Copies of ID and personal information are not transmitted or shared.

I had a CORI check done for a different organization. Why do I need another?

A CORI result does not transfer from one organization to another. Each agency must complete its own CORI check on an individual. Due to the confidential nature of the CORI process, agencies are not permitted to share the results of CORI checks. For example, staff working with a youth scouting organization within the parish must have a CORI check through the Diocese, even when a CORI is completed through the Scouts.

I work with youth in several parishes. Do I need a background check for each parish?

No, because the background checks are conducted by the Diocese, not the individual parish. You will need to verify to the parishes with which you are associated that you received the “Protecting Our Children” training, signed the Code of Conduct and completed the CORI process.

I did a background check in my work with a different diocese. Do I need a CORI check?

In these instances, please consult with the Office of Counseling, Prevention and Victim Services. In some cases, another diocese may be able to verify that you are in compliance with the Safe Environment requirements. Depending on that diocese’s Safe Environment training process, the time frame, the location, and the extent of your involvement with the Springfield Diocese youth programs, you may or not need to undergo a CORI check and training through the Springfield Diocese.

Does CORI apply to those under age 18?

Yes, if they work or volunteer in programs serving youth or vulnerable elders. Minors should be advised to review the matter with their parents or guardians. They may submit a school-issued photo ID for identification, or may use a driver’s license, learner’s permit, or a Massachusetts Identification Card from the Registry of Motor Vehicles—contact <http://www.mass.gov/rmv>.

For further information, contact:

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