



Diocese of Fort Worth Safe Environment Coordinators Quarterly Update

FIRST QUARTER FORUMS - JAN. 20 & 23



The Diocese's Safe Environment Program hosted two 2017 First Quarter Forum meetings for Coordinators on Jan. 20 and Jan 23 at the Catholic Center. It was very exciting to see the strong attendance of 82 Coordinators from across the Diocese coming together to build a network of communication for Best Practices in overseeing the Safe Environment program at their entity.

The new Associate Director, Dorothy Tyler, provided an overview of the volunteer application and training process and then outlined goals for the program for the coming year. Database Administrator, Nancy Mitchell, outlined the Background Check billing process and the annual audit process. Attendees submitted questions on a variety of topics some of which were answered during the sessions and the remainder will be addressed through this newsletter or email updates in the coming weeks.

Interview Questions

After a volunteer completes an application and their three references are checked, every applicant must participate in a personal interview. The interview can be done by the SEC or the ministry leader. Either who should date and sign off on the notes. One question from the forum was what questions should be asked during the Face to Face interview. In addition to the information listed on the [Ministry Volunteer Survey Tool](#) the questions listed on the website [VerifiedVolunteers.com](#) may be a helpful resource. The article discusses the reasons and goals for interviewing volunteers and lists several open ended questions that evaluate not only the volunteer's skills but additional questions which prompt responses that gauge an applicant's *emotional intelligence*. These questions will provide information about the applicant's "ability to perceive, reason with, understand and manage emotions", all of which are extremely important in creating a Safe Environment for children, youth and vulnerable adults.



GOALS FOR 2017

The Department set specific goals for the year 2017 to ensure compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, as well as to provide consistency and support to training within each deanery, standard operating procedures for the volunteer registration process, and to establish scheduled communication through quarterly meetings and a newsletter.

The Diocese staff will also provide guidance for the SEC's in preparation for the annual audit. Since the audit will be onsite this year it is extremely important that all data is submitted on or before the established submission dates. The focus of the next quarterly meeting will be the audit procedures and schedules, so please make plans to attend one of the sessions.

The most important goal for 2017 is to change to a database that is easier to navigate and has a better interface with our curriculum delivery.

Nancy has worked tirelessly over the past months to migrate the data to the Safe and Sacred database and this has been a real challenge. She has developed several work arounds to ensure the integrity of the data. Through the process it has become apparent that we need a database program that can manage our volume of data, while still being user friendly and compatible with our training provider.

With that being said, there is another component to this goal that we are also "shopping" for and that is training curriculum. While our current training meets the minimum criteria set out in the charter, we are also aware of the need to address new areas of risk and to identify additional methods of prevention.

Additionally, the Bishop has stated that training in the new curriculum will be in the face to face format.

We are in the process of evaluating different curriculum packages and databases that will meet our current and future needs.

For the time being, training will continue in the present online format. Certification and expiration dates will not change with the new system, so volunteers will not have to take the new training until their present certification expires.

Live Adult Training

- Better comprehension
- More Accountability
- Opportunity for discussion
- Fosters relationships between volunteers

Volunteers who have established relationships with the SEC, ministry leader, training facilitator and fellow volunteers are much more likely to reach out with questions or report concerns when we have developed a personal, face to face relationship beginning with the application and interview and then carry that interaction through to the training process.



BACKGROUND CHECK

RELEASE FORMS & REQUIREMENTS

Basic Criminal Background/Sex Offender Registry (Report required every 3 years)

- ✓ Required by **ALL** clergy, staff and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- ✓ Release is a "green form". May rerun background check for the three year renewal requirement using the same form if staff/volunteer has no interruption in service/employment status.

Driver Background Check (Report required once every year)

- ✓ Required for **ANYONE** driving children, youth or vulnerable adults regardless of number of times they will provide the service. This includes parents of the children.
- ✓ Drivers must be 21 years or older
- ✓ Drivers must provide insurance information as outlined in the Diocesan Risk Management manual

Fraud Background Check (Report required every 3 years)

- ✓ Required for anyone handling money (exception is a teen who has no credit history)

NOTE: Driver/Fraud release form is only valid for 90 days. The check must be run within 90 days from the date it is signed. If it is not submitted in that time period, a new form is required.

Forms are available online for download and signature. Applicant can keep a copy. (We are unable to print the releases in the Safe & Sacred online registration process). When processing a **new or renewing volunteer**, the best practice we will follow going forward is to retain a paper copy in each applicant's file. You will not be required to update current volunteer files until they expire and go through renewal.

ALL FORMS FOR VOLUNTEER FILES ARE FOUND AT THIS LINK:

<http://fwdioc.org/requirements-for-new-volunteers>

Plan to attend the 2017 Quarterly SEC Forums at the Catholic Center

Second Quarter

April 21: Friday 9am – 11am
April 24: Monday 1pm – 3pm

Third Quarter

July 21: Friday 9am – 11am
July 24: Monday 1pm – 3pm

Fourth Quarter

October 20: Friday 9am – 11am
October 23: Monday 1pm – 3pm



Please review the **QUESTIONS** submitted during both SEC Forum meetings in January. We have provided the **ANSWERS** with examples and document links as needed.

One of the most frequently asked questions is "Who is required to take SE training?" ALL clergy, laity, religious and volunteers who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults are required to complete Safe Environment training every 3 years.

Because of the numerous and varied opportunities to serve the Church a common sense approach to determining who has "substantial contact" with children is necessary.

Substantial contact is:

- Contact that is not incidental, or
- The service is such that it is reasonable to think that the person may at some time have contact with children outside the sight or hearing of other responsible adults.

Others, while not volunteering for activities designed to minister to youth, may be considered as having *significant contact* if it is reasonable to think that they may at times have contact with children outside the sight or hearing of other responsible adults. Some examples of this might be the parish sacristan who (it is reasonable to think) will at some point have contact with children in his/her duties. Other examples might be maintenance volunteers with access to school or parish education areas, parish office volunteers, and landscaping volunteers if such activities take place while children are present.

All programs where children and youth are present require the presence of **two screened and trained adults**, or **one adult and two age 16 year old or older teens**. This policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Religious education classes and programs
- Catholic school events and activities outside of a regular classroom setting
- Youth ministry programs and events
- Liturgy of the Word for children
- Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for children
- Babysitting, nursery and child care programs
- Choirs for children and youth
- Altar server training
- Vacation Bible School
- Scouting
- All sponsored training, and all events, regardless of where the programs or activities are held.