

Youth Worker Applicant

Information and Work Checklists



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Youth & Young Adult Ministries

Memo to Youth Worker Applicants

May 24, 2019
Saint Symeon the Stylite

Dear Youth Worker Applicant,

Christ is Risen!

It's a blessing to welcome you to our Youth Safety Team.

As we know you appreciate, ministry is about introducing young people to Christ and helping them live out their relationship with the Lord in His Church. And, in order to do that, we need to create ministry environments that are physically and spiritually safe and healthy.

The new **Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth** do exactly that.

And you're going to play a critical role in this important work. As a Youth Worker, your job will be to lead transformation for the Children and Youth who participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events. To create a healthy environment for this life-giving work, you must help ensure that your Parish is fully compliant with these Policies.

And that compliance begins with you.

We have developed a comprehensive, step-by-step plan to begin implementing the Policies.

In order to be eligible to participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events, you must first become a Youth Worker. Youth Workers, as you know, are people who have been registered, trained, and screened under these Policies.

In short, by going through the process of becoming a Youth Worker, you're going to help us make sure that the people who are leading our youth ministries are prepared and vetted: that we have the right people in place to undertake this critical work.

In the pages that follow, you'll find a checklist with everything you need to do in order to become a Youth Worker as required by the Policies.

We're both incredibly grateful that you've joined us in this groundbreaking work in the life of the Church.

Together, we can keep our kids safe. Glory to God!

In Christ,

Steven Christoforou
Director, Y2AM

Father Earl Cantos
Director & Youth Safety Compliance Officer

Key Highlights from the Policies

What are the Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth?

Approved by both our Holy Eparchial Synod of Bishops and our Archdiocesan Clergy Laity Congress in 2018, the Policies are the new framework for keeping our kids safe at Youth Ministry Programs and Events across the entire Archdiocese.

The Policies mandate two basic things:

1. Only Youth Workers can participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events;
2. Youth Workers must report all Abuse and Suspected Abuse, as well as other violations of the Policies; and

In addition, the Policies offer best practices that can be tailored for the needs of particular Youth Ministry Programs and Events.

Who is a Youth Worker?

A Youth Worker is the only person who is eligible to participate in Youth Ministry Programs or Events. In order to become a Youth Worker, a person must:

1. Register with his or her Parish Administrator (and re-register annually after that);
2. Complete the required online video training once per year; and
3. Successfully pass a background screen every two years.

Highlights (continued)

What is a Youth Ministry Program or Event?

A Youth Ministry Program or Event is any program or event in the Archdiocese that is designed to primarily serve Children or Youth.

This includes everything from youth groups (like HOPE, JOY, and GOYA) to educational programs (like Sunday School) to athletic programs (like Parish basketball and volleyball teams) to cultural programs (like Parish Greek school or Greek dance programs), in addition to youth retreats and camping programs.

What is mandated reporting?

Mandated reporting is something required by law in jurisdictions across the United States. Youth Workers must report to state authorities all instances of:

1. Abuse of Suspected Abuse of a Child or Youth;
2. Neglect or Suspect Neglect of a Child or Youth; and
3. Any imminent dangers to the life of a Child or Youth.

How do Youth Workers file such a report?

Our partners at Childhelp National Abuse Hotline are available to answer your questions and help direct you to the appropriate state authorities.

Call them at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453).

Highlights (continued)

What else should a Youth Worker report?

Whenever a Youth Worker makes a mandated report to state authorities, the Youth Worker must also file a Notice of Concern with his or her supervisor to ensure that Church leadership is also informed.

(A template Notice of Concern is included in this PDF for your reference.)

However, Youth Workers may also encounter violations of the Policies that do not rise to the level of a mandated report that needs to be made to state authorities. For example, a Youth Worker might observe someone engaging in inappropriate behavior (such as Bullying or Verbal Abuse) with a Child or Youth, or someone who has failed to uphold an appropriate boundary in an interaction with a Child or Youth that doesn't rise to the level of Abuse. These could include behavior between an adult and child or youth or between peers.

In such cases, the Youth Worker must file a Notice of Concern with his or her Supervisor. This is not about pointing fingers: it is about ensuring that boundaries are maintained and that potentially inappropriate conduct is addressed before it turns into something more serious.

What does it mean to be in compliance with the Policies?

A Parish's compliance with the Policies includes two basic items:

1. Youth Workers are the only people who are allowed to participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events; and
2. Youth Workers follow the requirements of the Policies when it comes to conduct, mandated reporting, etc.

Work Checklist for Youth Worker Applicants



1

Submit your full legal name, email address, and phone number to your Parish Youth Safety Administrator

- This begins the process of becoming a Youth Worker
- Your Parish Youth Safety Administrator will then load your contact information into the secure Armatus youth safety database
- The Armatus database is a service offered by Praesidium, the official youth safety vendor of the Archdiocese
- Praesidium is under contract with the Archdiocese, your Metropolis, and your individual Parish

2

Log-in to the secure Armatus database and complete your registration

- After your information is in the Armatus system, you will receive an email from Praesidium with a link to complete your registration process
- You will be able to complete the additional information needed for your user profile in the database
- Your confidential information will remain secure at all times

Work Checklist (continued)

3

Successfully complete the required youth safety training

- Our youth safety vendor, Praesidium, will offer online youth safety training to all potential Youth Workers
- This training is the core information needed to be a Youth Worker
- A link will be available once you complete your registration

4

Complete the required and confidential process for your background screen

- All potential Youth Workers need to successfully pass the required background screen
- This process will also be online
- A link will be available once you complete your registration
- You will need to pay a small fee for this background screen; that is the one and only cost associated with the process of becoming a Youth Worker
- Some Parishes, if they can afford it, may choose to pay for the background screening fees of their Parish Youth Workers

Work Checklist (continued)

5

Become certified as a Youth Worker

- Your Parish Youth Safety Administrator will confirm that you have successfully completed the required training and background screen
- If your background screen is not initially passed, the Youth Safety Administrator will simply see that this step has not been successfully completed (without seeing the details of the screen's result)
- Your background screen will be submitted to your Metropolis Background Check Review Board for additional review

Thank you very much for your desire and dedication to ensuring the well-being and safety of our Children and Youth.

Please direct any questions or concerns to:
Email: youthsafety@goarch.org | Phone: 480.440.2277

ONLY FOR METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh has policies in place requiring additional steps for Clergy, Parish Council Members, paid Staff and Youth Workers to be approved.

Please direct any questions or concerns for the Metropolis of Pittsburgh to:
Email: youthsafety@pittsburgh.goarch.org | Phone: 412.621.8543