



Local Safe Environment Coordinator (LoSEC) Guide

Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Green Bay

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SECTION 1

LOCAL SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR LoSEC

- Local Safe Environment Coordinator Position Description

Local Safe Environment Coordinator (LoSEC) Position Description

Pre-requisites

- A. Due to the sensitive nature of the information accessed, it is of extreme importance that this person understands that confidentiality and discretion are critical to this position. To ensure confidentiality for the person completing an application for service as a volunteer or employee, the following considerations should be paramount in establishing process and procedures:
- the personal integrity of the Local Safe Environment Coordinator (LoSEC) having read and understood the Local Safe Environment Coordinator Delegation of Responsibility and Confidentiality Statement (1-2)
 - limited access to applications, reports, and documentation, and
 - the security required to protect and restrict access to the information (i.e., locked file cabinets with limited access; password protected computer workstations)
- B. The LoSEC must possess computer skills including using the internet and EXCEL spreadsheets.
- C. The LoSEC agrees to participate in diocesan sponsored training and guidance in navigating and accessing the VIRTUS website.

Responsibilities

1. The LoSEC is responsible for ensuring all applicants for employment or volunteer services have completed all safe environment requirements, to include a Diocesan approved background check, safe environment training, and read, reviewed, and signed a Code of Conduct.
2. The LoSEC is responsible for ensuring completion of the VIRTUS program *Protecting God's Children* Adult Online Awareness Session and completion of the online training bulletins by required employees. (See Policy on Maintaining Safe Environments-Diocesan Policies and Resources)
3. The LoSEC is responsible for submitting requested reports to the Diocese of Green Bay in accordance with the Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Protect Children and Young People*.

These guidelines are subject to change.

The Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* is regularly reviewed at the Bishops' national meetings. The national USCCB audit/review process may require that reports and documentation be submitted by local parishes/schools.

SECTION 2

Adult Employees

- Screening Process for Adult Employees
- VIRTUS Registration Instructions for Employment

SCREENING PROCESS FOR ADULT EMPLOYMENT APPLICANTS

1. Applicants must register in VIRTUS (if they do not already have an account) to complete the required Safe Environment Tasks (submit a background check, e-sign the code of conduct, and to complete the online Safe Environment Training. The applicant must select the location of the school and/or parish in which they are applying to.
 - a. If an applicant has an existing account in VIRTUS, please contact the Office of Safe Environment to add them to your location so that you have access to their account.
2. The LoSEC or interviewing supervisor is responsible for checking references provided by the applicant. References are provided online by the applicant when they submit their background check. References may be contacted by telephone or by email.
3. Once the background check shows as completed and approved, the LoSEC will notify the hiring supervisor. It is imperative that a background check be force prompted in VIRTUS, even if an individual has a background check on file within another Diocesan school and/or Parish. This person is new to you, and must be treated as such.
4. The LoSEC or appropriate supervisor will inform the new employee should participation in the online training bulletin program provided by VIRTUS be required (Page 7 of the *Our Promise to Protect* lists the roles required to read the monthly VIRTUS bulletins).

VIRTUS Registration Information – Adult Employment Applicants

Before going online to register, be sure to have the following information available:

- Social Security Number (non-negotiable requirement for background check)
- An employee must provide 5 references, 3 professional/civic and 2 personal references.
- Reference information required - a first and last name, address, city, state, phone and how long the applicant has known this person, and relationship.
- A professional/civic reference is a supervisor/manager for whom you have worked for in a professional and/or volunteer capacity.
- A personal reference is a Pastor, coach, fellow committee member, friend, neighbor, or co-worker (including volunteer activities)
 *****DO NOT use FAMILY MEMBERS as references.*****
- All references must be over 18 years of age

It is important that the person registers in VIRTUS using their full legal first name and last name as that is the name that drives the background check. Please also reiterate that the individual must select your location so that the background check is correctly invoiced

SECTION 3

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

- Instructions for Adult Volunteers
- VIRTUS Registration Instructions for Adult Volunteers
- Adult Volunteer Reference Check Questions

SCREENING PROCESS FOR ADULT VOLUNTEER APPLICANTS

1. Volunteers must register in VIRTUS (if they do not already have an account) to complete the Safe Environment Requirements (submit a background check, e-sign the code of conduct, and to complete the online Safe Environment Training). The applicant must select the location of the school and/or parish in which they are applying to.
 - a. If an applicant has an existing account in VIRTUS, please contact the Office of Safe Environment to add them to your location so that you have access to their account.
2. The LoSEC or interviewing supervisor is responsible for checking references provided by the applicant. A volunteer applicant must provide 3 references, 2 professional/civic and 1 personal reference. References may be contacted by telephone or by email.
3. It is imperative that a background check is force prompted in VIRTUS, even if a volunteer has a background check on file within another Diocesan school and/or Parish. This person is new to you and must be treated as such.

VIRTUS Registration Information – Adult Volunteers

Before going online to register, be sure to have the following information available:

- Social Security Number (non-negotiable requirement for background check)
 - If a volunteer does not have a legal SSN, please refer to the “*Supervised Volunteer Process*”
- A volunteer must provide 3 references: 2 professional/civic and 1 personal reference
- Reference information required - a first and last name, address, city, state, phone and how long the volunteer has known this person, and relationship.
- A professional/civic reference is a supervisor/manager for whom you have worked for in a professional and/or volunteer capacity.
- A personal reference is a Pastor, coach, fellow committee member, friend, neighbor, or co-worker (including volunteer activities)
 - *****DO NOT use FAMILY MEMBERS as references.*****
- All references must be over 18 years of age

It is important that the person registers in VIRTUS using their full legal first name and last name as that is the name that drives the background check. Please also reiterate that the individual must select your location so that the background check is correctly invoiced

EXAMPLE VOLUNTEER REFERENCE CHECK QUESTIONNAIRE

Your response to this request will be kept confidential and will not be shared with the volunteer named herein.

_____ is interested in sharing time, talent, and service with our Catholic parish/Catholic school/Catholic agency. Your name has been submitted as a reference.

How long have you known this person? _____

What is your relationship to this person? _____

This volunteer ministry involves contact with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. Is there anything in this person's background or in your feelings that would suggest you have a concern about this person working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults?

No Yes I prefer to speak with you by phone

Comments:

Please return this filled out form via email.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for assisting us in our efforts to create safer environments for all of God's people.

**You may customize this form so that it is specific to your location, and/or you may use these questions as examples to guide your reference checks completed over the phone. It is recommended to store reference check information online in VIRTUS. (located under the "Background Check Tab" of a user's profile).*



Safe Environment Policy on Supervised Volunteers

The Diocese of Green Bay is committed to creating, providing, and maintaining safe environments in all its parishes, schools, and other institutions. Safe environments are essential so that all persons, especially children, and individuals at risk, will be protected from harm.

This policy allows volunteers in a parish, school or Catholic institution that are unable to obtain a Social Security number, the ability to be active as a volunteer in the parishes and schools. They will be referred to as supervised volunteers.

If a supervised volunteer is involved in a ministry that has contact with children, young people and individuals at risk, the supervised volunteer is required to:

- Register at www.virtus.org to complete an online application.
 - The applicant will be asked to provide three (3) references.
 - If the applicant does not have a Social Security number, please click on the box next to the Social Security number field and enter 9's.
- Complete all sections. This includes reading and acknowledging the Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct for Volunteers.
- Submit the application.
- Once the application is submitted, please complete the VIRTUS Adult Online Awareness Training Session. (www.virtus.org)

Since the supervised volunteer is not able to provide a Social Security number, a limited background check will be run. A limited background check is not a complete background check; thus, the supervised volunteer will not be allowed to volunteer in an unsupervised environment. Supervised volunteers may never be left alone with children or individuals at risk and must always be supervised by a parish/school employee or volunteer that has met all safe environment requirements (a completed and approved background check, completed online safe environment training and have signed either the Our Promise to Protect for employees or the Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct for Volunteers).

An adult who is fully safe environment compliant must sign an agreement to supervise a volunteer that falls under the supervised volunteer policy. The agreement to supervise a volunteer that falls under the supervised volunteer policy must be signed every year or each time a new supervisor is required. **A copy of the signed Supervisor form must be sent to the Office of Safe Environment.**

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the removal of the person from ministry or the denial of volunteer service within the diocese.

This policy is in compliance with *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms, Statement of Episcopal Commitment*. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002, revised 2005, 2011 and 2018.)

SECTION 5

YOUTH EMPLOYEES UNDER 18* YOUTH VOLUNTEERS UNDER 18*

- Youth Employees Under 18
- Youth Volunteers Under 18

- Youth Volunteer (Under Age 18) Paper Application

- Youth Employee Code of Conduct Agreement Form
- Youth Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement Form

*Legally, youth are not considered adults until they are 18. All high school-age youth under 18 must have adult supervision while volunteering their services or being employed.

*Youth Volunteers not of high school age must always be under the direct care of a background checked/VIRTUS trained adult and should not be placed in supervisory positions.

*Youth Volunteers do not register in VIRTUS, the process for Youth Volunteers is a paper process that is to be kept on file at your location.

YOUTH EMPLOYEES UNDER 18

1. Employment candidates under the age of 18 are required to register at www.virtus.org to begin the online registration process which will allow for the submission of a background check and assign a safe environment training lesson called *Healthy Relationships for Teens*. (Registration instructions can be found on the VIRTUS homepage)
 - a. Employment candidates under the age of 18 must obtain from their parish or school location the document “Authorization for Consumer Reports”.
 - b. The “Authorization for Consumer Reports” must be signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the employment candidate under the age of 18.
 - c. The signed “Authorization for Consumer Reports” must be turned into the Local Safe Environment Coordinator, (LoSEC) at the parish or school location.
 - d. The LoSEC must scan and email the “Authorization for Consumer Reports” to the Office of Safe Environment.
 - e. The employment candidate under the age of 18 must log into www.virtus.org and register as an Employee, complete all required fields, and submit for the background check. The LoSEC or designated person must check references.
 - f. Once the Office of Safe Environment confirms the background check is completed, a status of “Restricted” will be noted on the file. The “Authorization for Consumer Reports” will then be forwarded to Human Resources at the Diocese. Human Resources will retain the signed “Authorization for Consumer Reports” in their confidential files.
 - g. Once the Office of Safe Environment notes the file as “Restricted” the Office of Safe Environment will notify the location requesting to employ the under 18-year-old, that the location can move forward with employing the under 18-year-old.
 - h. **IMPORTANT** because the under 18-year-old cannot attend the Protecting God’s Children Adult Online Awareness Training, until they turn 18, the under 18-year-old must always be in the presence of an adult that does meet the safe environment requirements of having a completed and approved background check and safe environment training using the VIRTUS program.
 - i. The employee under 18 must read, review, and sign the Youth Code of Conduct.

Youth Employees under the age of 18 are **NOT ALLOWED** to attend a
VIRTUS *Protecting God’s Children* Adult Awareness Session.

SECTION 6

Other considerations/important information

- Youth Employees Turning 18
- Force-prompting background checks/background check information
- Guidelines for keeping paperwork
- Youth Participants Turning 18 Before/During Mission Trips
- Switching from a volunteer to employee
- Money counters

1. Youth Employees Turning 18

When a youth employee turns 18, the following Safe Environment requirements must be prompted:

- **Updated Background Check**
- **E-signing the Code of Conduct**
- **Completion of Protecting God's Children Training**

Please also notify the **Office of Safe Environment** once a youth employee reaches age 18 so their profile can be updated accordingly.

2. Background Checks

When you manually **force prompt** a background check, please ensure that:

- **Your location is listed as the primary location in VIRTUS** on the individual's account.

This ensures the **invoice is sent to the correct site**.

Background checks are automatically prompted every 4 years; however they must be force-prompted for anyone that is new to you, even if they have a background check at a different Diocesan location. This applies to all volunteers who are ministering to children and vulnerable adults, to money counters, and ALL employees regardless of their role.

Entering a Social Security number is a non-negotiable if someone has a legal SSN.

Please **contact Human Resources at the Diocese of Green Bay** for anyone who is being hired from another Diocesan school or parish

3. Youth Participants Turning 18 Before/During Mission Trips

Youth participants who turn 18 before or during a mission trip **are not required** to complete VIRTUS safe environment requirements as they are considered participants **unless they are managing or overseeing other youth**.

If the **Organizing Group** requires VIRTUS training or background checks, **their guidelines must be followed**.

For overnight retreats/trips, please ensure that 18-year-olds are rooming with other 18 year olds or in a single room.

4. Guidelines for Paperwork

Please keep Safe Environment paperwork that aligns with the **USCCB audit cycle (every 3 years)**. Any paperwork older than three years **may be discarded**.

Suggested paperwork to keep on file:

- Authorization for Consumer Reports (background check authorization for Youth Employees Under 18)
- Youth Employee Code of Conduct Agreement Form
- Youth Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement Form & Youth Under 18 Volunteer Application
- Signed Supervised Volunteer Form
- Survey Paperwork (related to Safe Environment audits)
- Opt-Out Forms for Safe Environment Lesson Plans for Children

- Reference checks that were kept via paper records (Recommended to store this information in VIRTUS)

5. Switching from a Volunteer to an Employee

When someone is being hired and is switching roles from a volunteer to an employee, it is important that **their role is updated in VIRTUS** and that they **complete a new background check**.

6. Money Counters

Money counters are required to go through **VIRTUS** to complete a **background check** and **e-sign the Code of Conduct**. They are **not required to complete training**. When the role of “**Money Counter**” is selected in VIRTUS, the system will automatically **not assign training**.

it is best practice that anyone who oversees money/makes financial decisions at the Parish/School level should complete VIRTUS (example: being on the Finance Council).