

Upstate New York District Background Check Information

"No person who has committed sexual abuse against a child may hold any ministerial credential, serve in any position of responsibility for or ministry with children, or be elected or appointed to any leadership role in the local church. This means that such individuals may serve as parishioners only, with no other responsibilities within the church." BGS Ruling (October 2020)

For the protection of our children and youth, those who have been abused who attend our churches, and our witness to Christ in the world, the Church of the Nazarene has a zero-tolerance policy for sex offenders to serve in the church. This means those who have committed such crimes can attend, but not volunteer in any capacity. With this in mind, every church needs to do a background check on EVERY volunteer. This is not optional but required by our Manual and Board of General Superintendents. We also recommend that every church engage with MinistrySafe for training and safety plans. If cost is a problem, the district will help support a local church to accomplish this. Contact office@upstatedistrict.org to ask for help.

Pastoral and Staff Background Check Process

Each candidate for a pastoral or staff assignment on the district will be background-checked before being considered. This information will be shared on a need-to-know basis or with whomever the district is legally obligated to disclose such information. The spouse of each candidate will also be screened.

- **Senior/Lead Pastors:** The district will administer and cover the cost for all senior/lead pastor candidates and their spouses, if applicable
 - The district will own the background check information and assume responsibility for maintaining it securely
- **Staff pastors and other employees:** The local church will administer and cover the cost for all paid and unpaid staff it wishes to have employed in any capacity and their spouses, if applicable
 - The church will own the background check information and assume responsibility for maintaining it securely. The church will honestly share the information with the district for approval purposes

Please note: Every pastor must fill out the "Request to Hire" form for all paid and unpaid staff. Approval will not be given by the District Superintendent until after the background check has been found **clear** for both the paid and unpaid staff and their spouse, is applicable-- see list in Manual 211.13 . We have included all types of employees in this policy given the BGS ruling listed above. The background check(s) must be completed before taking the candidate to the church board for final approval. The request to hire form and this policy can be found at upstatedistrict.org

Local Church Resources

[Children's Safety Policy Sample](#)

[Youth Safety Policy Sample](#)

[Social Media and Text Policy Sample](#)