

The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado



Using *Secure Search* for Conducting Background Checks in the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado



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Introduction

Secure Search is a full service personal background research company specializing in the accumulation and distribution of public records via state-of-the-art internet technology. They currently have offices in Castle Rock, CO. Secure Search is an additional choice for Episcopal churches in Colorado to perform background checks on all non-ordained staff and volunteers who work with children and youth. It is a valuable resource due to the breadth of coverage in their background checks, ease of use, affordability, and great customer service.

Signing on with Secure Search will make it easy for Episcopal churches in Colorado to begin doing background checks on current and potential volunteers and non-ordained staff who work with children and youth. In addition, signing on as a diocese will give Colorado churches discounted rates on background checks. We still recommend that churches use Oxford Documents to perform checks on incoming clergy because Oxford performs, among other things, a bishop check on each applicant. Using Secure Search will serve the churches in the diocese by assisting them in complying with the Parish Policies for Ministry with Children and Youth. This is one more tool to make our churches a safe place for people of all ages to engage in the Gospel of Christ.

Policy

Section 3.1 of the *Episcopal Diocese of Colorado: Policies for Parish Ministries with Children and Youth* states “Church Workers who regularly work with or around children or youth must be appropriately screened. Screening must include at least the following:

- 3.1.1 A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks.
- 3.1.2 Reference checks of persons who know the applicant; preferably who knows how the applicant works with children or youth. A minimum of two references must be from outside the congregation.
- 3.1.3 Criminal records check of all applicants, except Sunday School teachers, in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
- 3.1.4 Sexual offender registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
- 3.1.5 Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person will be regularly transporting children or youth.
- 3.1.6 A face-to-face interview of the applicant by the rector or rector’s designee(s).

Secure Search enables a church to complete 3.1.3, 3.1.4 and 3.1.5 at an affordable price. The Bishop and Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado requires that background checks be performed only through Secure Search or Trak-1 (contact us for information on Trak-1)

Information on how to get started with Secure Search

Step 1:

- a. Simply print the attached document named **SecureSearch Agreement for Service** – You will need to fill out page 1 and sign page 5. **Attachment A** (pages 6-10) are for your records and review. This is also available online at the Diocesan website – www.coloradodiocese.org – go to Faith Formation and Safe Church.
- b. Initial where indicated on the enclosed pricing matrix (also available online at the Diocesan website). You are welcome to star or circle the services you are most interested in using.
- c. Fax pages 1 - 5 of the Agreement for Service and the Pricing Agreement to **1.866.552.7326**

Step 2:

Choose a **Consent Form** from the two templates provided. These are also available online at the Diocesan website. Then customize the one you choose with your organization's name, etc. Have all applicants fill out and sign. You will use these consent forms and their data to conduct your on-line searches. You are responsible for protecting the applicant data in a safe and locked location.

Step 3: (Optional based on service requested)

If selecting our Package #3 (Full Executive Staff Member Screening Package) then you must also have your applicant fill out the attachment named **Full Executive Staff Screening Request** (also available online at the Diocesan website). You will use the additional data to fill in the additional screens when requesting this service.

SecureSearch may require you to fax a copy of this form, if necessary, to complete all of the services.

Note: This package is recommended for paid staff working with, or overseeing, ministries with children or youth.

Feel free to call or e-mail at anytime.

Phone: 1-866-891-1954/720-880-3244

Fax: 1.866.552.7326

E-mail: customerservice@securesearchpro.com

Website: www.securesearchpro.com

Coverage and Pricing

Product/Service Description	Search/individual
<p><u>VOLUNTEER PACKAGE:</u></p> <p>Multi-State Criminal Search with Alias and SSN Trace PLUS COLORADO COURTS (Instant and Online)</p> <p>Multi-State with Alias and SSN Trace is a multi-faceted search that combines our Multi-State Criminal and National Sex Offender Search with the known aliases provided from a SSN trace. With a name, date of birth and SSN, we report the state and the approximate date of issuance of the SSN. We then run the SSN through the Death Master Index. Next, we run a SSN trace to obtain a list of alias names, including maiden names. We then use this information to make a final pass through our National criminal database.</p> <p><i>Includes this Add-On:</i> Colorado Statewide County Search (all counties) Instant turnaround time</p> <p>With one search, you can search more than 245 million criminal records from counties, Department of Corrections (DOC), Administration of the Court (AOC) and state sex offender registries covering all 50 states and Washington, DC. Also included are national and international terrorism sources, more than 1.8 million photos and our proprietary database of previously completed reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>see list for details.</i> 	<p>Only \$20.00</p>
<p><u>STAFF AND CLERGY PACKAGE:</u></p> <p>Our Full Executive Staff Member Screening Package</p> <p>Includes our Multi-State Criminal and Sexual Offender Search with Alias and SSN Trace PLUS COLORADO COURTS and augmented, when necessary, by individual county searches (up to 2), of addresses not covered in the on-line search. A full credit report (if a site visit is conducted) or a SSN Trace to verify identity, a motor vehicle driving report and previous employment (up to 3) and education verifications of higher degrees. (up to 2)</p> <p><i>This report averages 72 business hours or more to complete all orders</i></p>	<p>Only \$79.99 plus any court, school or employer access fees</p>

* For “add-ons” see next page

Add On: In-Depth Individual County Criminal Search (Manual process; can take up to 48-72 hours)	\$13.99 plus court access fees if applicable
Add On: Civil Courts Search (7 Years)	Upper: \$13.00 Lower: \$13.00 Combined: \$17.00
Add On: MVR records – Results are instant from 45 states. Some states take a little longer. A faxed copy of the applicant's consent is necessary in some states.	\$5.00 plus State MVR Fee
Add On: Social Security Number Trace (SSN): a compilation of data from all 3 credit bureaus and some proprietary data sources to help verify previous addresses and names going back 25 years	\$4.00
Add On: Education Verification – Higher Education Only	\$11.00 per school plus applicable access fees
Add On: Previous Employer Verification	\$10.00 per employer plus applicable access fees
Add On: Federal District Courts Search	\$15.00 per district \$23.00 National
Add On: Colorado Statewide County Search (all counties) Instant turnaround time	\$9.99
Add On: Full Employment Credit Report (Equifax Persona) <u>NOTE: If you desire access to credit reports you must agree to a physical site visit and inspection. The cost of the site visit is \$85.00. Please inquire.</u>	\$9.99

Prices are Subject to Change. SecureSearch will provide 30 days notice of any change.

Drug Testing Also Available – Please Inquire

Customer Support/Learning the System

Secure Search offers outstanding customer support which is available during normal business hours by phone and by email. The Office for Faith Formation can also assist you.

The Role of the Diocese

The diocesan office will have access to information pertaining to which churches in the diocese are obtaining checks with Secure Search, who they obtain them for, when they obtain them and how many. Beyond that, the diocese will have access to no other information, including information contained in the background checks.

The Role of the Congregation

It is the role of the congregation to acquire the background checks, pay for them, review the information they contain, decide whether to allow the individual to work with children or youth, and to maintain the records in a secure manner. The diocese will monitor compliance with the policy and ensure that required screenings are being done.

So...how do we get started?

Getting signed on with Secure Search and doing the first check is very simple. The Diocese of Colorado has signed an agreement with Secure Search regarding pricing for volume discounts, but each individual parish will sign its own contract with Secure Search and will have its own account, sign-on, invoice, etc. To obtain an account with Secure Search, each individual congregation should:

- Decide who will perform the background checks (who is the “rector’s designee?”)
- Make sure the church has a locked file cabinet in which to store the private information
- Prepare the consent/information form for applicants to sign (churches need to use the provided letter and can only change it by adding the church’s name and letterhead). This form cannot be incorporated into an application for employment/volunteering and should have its own signature
- Develop a plan of action (which should include consulting a lawyer) for if, how, and when the church decides to take adverse action on an applicant (i.e. decides not to hire a staff member or volunteer)
- Provide church and payment information on the contract
- Sign the contract and send or fax it to Secure Search

Upon receipt of the contract, Secure Search will process the church's application and will quickly send an email to the contact person with the church's sign-on information. The rector or rector's designee for performing background checks will then use this information to request background checks. The interface is very easy to use and Secure Search provides instruction on using their site. In addition, Secure Search customer service representatives are very willing to walk new users through their first few checks.

Secure Search bills each church individually. Churches can opt to pay automatically by credit card or to be invoiced by email or regular mail (this needs to be approved by Secure Search first).

Other Questions

Q: Can a church choose to use Secure Search but not do the searches online?

A: Yes; there is a \$2.00 fee to fax the order to Secure Search and have them do the check.

Q: Can entities within the diocese share information on applicants with one another if a staff member or volunteer temporarily helps out at another church, camp, or other activity within the diocese (e.g., if a volunteer at Good Shepherd serves as a counselor at Trinity Ranch)?

A: Yes; it is recommended that the applicant sign a letter giving permission to share this information.

Q: If we can share this information with one another within the diocese, does this mean that a new background check is not necessary if a staff member or volunteer transfers to another church within the diocese?

A: No. In order for a church to show due diligence in adequately screening new applicants, each "new hire" (whether paid or volunteer) should have a new background check performed.

Q: What if some churches desire not to use Secure Search?

A: If a church desires to use another form of screening, it must first receive approval for an alternate to Secure Search or Trak-1 from Bishop of the Diocese of Colorado or the Standing Committee.

Q: If we have been using Trak-1 or Secure Search can we switch to the other provider?

A: Yes. Both companies are approved providers for background checks and you are not "bound" to any one.