

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) Background Checks, Western NC Conference and TRAK-1**

The Western NC Conference of The United Methodist Church has entered into a relationship with TRAK-1 to provide low-cost national background checks to every church and church related agency within the boundaries of the annual conference. These background checks are available for as little as \$10.00 per person. A national criminal background check allows every local church to run a multi-state criminal and national sexual offender search plus a social security number trace which verifies the year and state of issuance for non-random Social Security Numbers, checks the Death Master Index to ensure the number is not associated with someone who is deceased, and will provide all addresses and aliases associated with the SSN..

For an increased price a Division of Motor Vehicles check can be run to inform you of the driving record of those transporting persons within your congregation and community. You may also expand the criminal record search by conducting additional checks at the state or county level based on the addresses identified in the SSNTrak report.

Additionally, any volunteer or potential employee that works with your finances and handles money, a credit report is recommended and can be run for an additional cost.

Ready to sign up with TRAK-1 and start running national criminal BroadScreen background checks, [Click Here](#) or go to <https://www.trak-1.com/r/wncumc/>.

### **Who in our church or church related ministry needs to have a background check?**

A national criminal background and sex offender registry check is necessary for any volunteer who is interested in serving in ministry with children, youth or any vulnerable adult population. Vulnerable adults may include people over the age of 18 who have physical, emotional or cognitive impairment.

A national criminal background and sex offender registry check is also necessary for all potential employees of the church or church related agency.

It is recommended by TRAK-1 that you consider expanding the criminal background check, as mentioned above, to ensure you obtain as complete and accurate picture of an individual's criminal history as possible.

### **What does "BroadScreen Criminal Search" mean?**

Using the applicant's name and date of birth, TRAK-1 queries our national database of over 800 million records from 1,400 sources for criminal history, including felonies, misdemeanors, sexual offenses, and where permitted, felony traffic offenses. The search also includes Federal watch lists for the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC), the Drug enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Explosives (ATF), and Most Wanted lists for the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the US Secret Service, America's Most Wanted, and the US Marshall's Office. To comply with FCRA guidelines, TRAK-1 verifies criminal hits associated with the applicant by searching the original reporting jurisdiction at the time the report is produced.

The BroadScreen search does contain information from all 50 states. Some sources may not be available in all states such as Department of Corrections (DOC) records, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), specific county court records, or state repository records for example.

A statewide or county criminal search can supplement the BroadScreen criminal background check in the event that you have any reason or information that indicates a need for more detailed information.

Please consult with TRAK-1 to ensure you are conducting the most appropriate searches for your location. If information is not as strong in a state where you require background screening an additional criminal search in a state or local jurisdiction may be recommended at a higher cost than BroadScreen.

### **What is a Statewide Criminal search?**

TRAK-1 uses various methods including online, electronic, and manual court repository searches to physically search and identify potential criminal records if a Statewide Criminal search is requested. This is a single state search. Keep in mind that the actual court documents may only contain “conviction” records as opposed to “arrest” records. Sometimes particular arrest records are reported depending on the state and data entry clerk who archives such records. This particular search takes anywhere from 24 – 72 hours, is limited to a singular state, but may be more thorough than the BroadScreen search in a particular state.

### **What else is covered in the background check?**

SSN Trak – Using the applicant’s social security number, TRAK-1 provides a complete history of all reported addresses and aliases and dates of birth associated with the SSN. This search verifies that the number is valid and does not appear on the Social Security Administration’s Death Master Index. For non-randomized numbers the state and date range of issuance are interpreted and provided.

### **When would we need to run an MVR (Motor Vehicle Record, i.e. Driver’s License Check) check?**

An MVR screening would be necessary for all drivers that are interested in driving your church/ministry owned vehicles, such as buses or vehicles.

An MVR screening will also be necessary if you are asking volunteers/parents to provide transportation to others in the congregation that are not related to them. This could be for children or youth events, ministry/church sponsored trips, for afterschool pick up ministries, or for older adult transportation with those that no longer are able to drive themselves to church or different church sponsored events.

### **Will our church or church related agency be held responsible or found liable if we run a background check, it comes back clear, and the person has a criminal record that was not uncovered?**

No, as long as you are doing what is reasonable and prudent given the information that we have been given. We cannot, and do not have to, be so complete in our screening processes that we uncover every possible conviction of every single thing. Doing what is reasonable in today’s world includes following the recommending screening practices of

Safe Sanctuaries - doing the criminal background check, checking references, interviewing, and having some type of application process.

However, reasonableness does not push us to the level of being guarantors of the veracity and completeness of every background check. No child or youth serving organization can be such a guarantor.

### **Who has access to the background checks once they are run?**

The background reports are confidential and only available to the named administrator on the church or church related agency's account. The conference also has a named administrator who has access to view the completed background reports. These reports will only be viewed by the conference administrator when (1) the church or church related agency is asking for aid in understanding a report or determining appropriate next steps; (2) the applicant is volunteering/chaperoning for a district or conference sponsored children or youth event and needs a national criminal background check before serving; (3) when required to do so in accordance with state and federal laws.

### **How long are these national BroadScreen background checks valid?**

The frequency with which you choose to update background checks should be written within your church or agency's Safe Sanctuaries policy and procedures. It is the conference's recommendation that you update background screenings every four (4) years if there has been continuity in the applicant's address and involvement in the church/agency.

A new background screening needs to occur whenever someone has a change in geographical location that breaks their relationship with the organization, is offering themselves and their gifts to a ministry area for the first time, or has not had a national background screening through TRAK-1 and your church/agency in the last 4 years.

TRAK-1 recommends updating an individual's background check on a more frequent basis, every year or at a minimum every two (2) years. TRAK-1 does recognize the fiscal impact this can have on each church and church related entity, understands the reason for the conference recommendation, and will support the guidance and direction provided by the Annual Conference.

### **What do I do if I run a national criminal background screening and a conviction shows up on the report?**

Before you begin initiating background checks, it is imperative that you have a Safe Sanctuaries policy (or employee handbook) that clearly states what action will be taken if and when a person authorizes you to perform a background check on them and a "hit" comes back on the report. It is not necessary to list every situation and scenario. It is important, however, that you have a statement that provides clear parameters of what disqualifies someone from ministry with children, youth and vulnerable adult populations.

### **Who do I contact if I still have questions?**

If you have questions about TRAK-1 specifically, contact TRAK-1 at (800) 600-8999 or visit <https://www.trak-1.com/r/wnccumc/>.

IF you have questions about Safe Sanctuaries or other aspects of the implementation of TRAK-1, contact WNCC Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, Rev. Michelle Foster-Beckerleg at [mfoster@wnccumc.net](mailto:mfoster@wnccumc.net).