

# SAYF Background Check Procedures

April 2, 2014

## Definitions:

- **Applicant:** an adult that completes a SAYMA Child/Youth Worker Application Form
- **Background check:** the full process of vetting an applicant, including application, reference checks, ESR criminal and driver database checks, and any flagged application process
- **Flagged Application:** An application for which there has been any information (from the reference or criminal and driver history checks) that raises questions about the application.

## Background checks are mandatory for:

1. Steering Committee Members
2. All Friendly Adult Nurturers (FANs)
3. Any Friendly Adult Driver (FAD) that drives teens during a retreat

## Background checks are preferred for:

1. Adults who drive teens to or from a retreat (this background check is the responsibility of the Monthly Meeting)
2. Night Shepherds

## Who is involved in conducting background checks:

- *All steps in the application process are held in complete confidence by those involved.*
- SAYF Administrative Assistant is the “Administrator” of the process.
- Employment Screening Resources (ESR) is the company SAYMA uses to conduct national criminal and drivers license database checks.
- The SAYF Steering Committee member from the applicant’s Monthly Meeting conducts reference checks.
- The SAYF Steering Committee co-clerks plus the Steering Committee member from the applicant’s Monthly Meeting season and approve decisions about “flagged” applications.

## Record-keeping:

- Background private check information (notes from reference checks, notes from any flagged applicant process, and ESR criminal background check results) will be kept in a secure location for six years.
- The shared list of applicants will only include the individual’s name, monthly meeting, mailing address, contact number and email, and checkboxes to show that references and background checks have been completed successfully.

## **Background Check Process:**

### **Step One: Application Form**

The applicant completes a basic information form that asks for contact information, references, and whether or not the applicant has a criminal record. This form can be completed in hard copy or online.

The Administrator enters the applicant's information from the application form into the SAYMA Background Check database (shared document between SAYF Administrator, JYM Administrator and SAYMA Administrative Assistant) and sends application (including reference information) to the Steerer from the applicant's Monthly Meeting.

➔ Go to "Reference Check"

### **Step Two: Reference Check**

The Steerer from the applicant's Monthly Meeting will complete reference checks in seven days.

If references both recommend the applicant and do not present any reason to flag the application, it is sent to the Administrator to run an ESR criminal background check.

➔ Go to "Background Check"

If information gained from references raises questions about the application that seem to warrant gathering more background information, the application will be "flagged" and sent to the Administrator to run an ESR criminal background check.

➔ Go to "Background Check" then "Flagged Application"

If either of the two references is not willing or able to recommend the applicant, the application will be declined.

➔ Go to "Declined Application"

If information gained from references is strong or disturbing enough that the Steerer who is conducting the reference check does not feel comfortable recommending the applicant, the application is declined.

➔ Go to "Declined Application"

### **Step Two: Background Check**

The SAYF Administrator will initiate a the ESR background check process. SAYF will run a Basic + Motor Vehicle check. The Administrator first sends an email to the applicant explaining the background check process and allowing them to "opt out" if

they do not want the results of their background check emailed. However, the applicant will have to have email access to complete this process.

The Administrator then enters the applicant's email address into the ESR system which triggers an ESR email to the applicant with a link to complete the secure online form. The applicant has 14 days to complete this online form, which should take no longer than 10 minutes.

ESR posts background check results on their website in 2-3 days.

If neither the reference checks nor the ESR background check returns any unexplained information, the applicant is accepted.

➔ Go to "Accepted Application"

If the ESR background check returns any unexplained information about the applicant, the Administrator contacts the Steerer from the applicant's meeting to begin the Flagged Application process.

➔ Go to "Flagged Application"

### **Step Three: Flagged Application**

The Steerer from the applicant's meeting calls the applicant and asks them to explain the flagged information from their background check and/or references.

This Steerer brings this information to the SAYF Steering Committee co-clerks for seasoning. Queries that might be considered include:

- What is the nature of the concern? That is, are we talking about a civil disobedience arrest for blocking a recruiting office, a trespassing offense for hopping trains, or an assault charge? What factual information do we have? Do we need additional factual information? How can we get the information we need and respect individual privacy rights?
- How long ago did the incident occur? How old was the applicant at the time?
- Was the incident disclosed on the application?
- Does the existence of this history make us question a candidate's suitability? Why? (or why not?)

If reference checks did not flag the applicant and the group of Steerers concludes that the explanation is satisfactory, the applicant is accepted.

➔ Go to "Accepted Application"

If the explanation is not satisfactory or does not mesh with information gained from references and the group of Steerers cannot unite around accepting the application, the application is declined.

➔ Go to "Declined Application"

#### **Step Four: Accepted Application**

The Administrator contacts the applicant to inform him/her that he/she is accepted as a volunteer with SAYMA youth. A PDF of the applicant's background check will be downloaded from the secure ESR site on the "View Orders" tab and emailed to the applicant unless he/she has opted out.

The Administrator adds the applicant's contact information (name, email, phone, address, and Monthly meeting) to a shared list of approved volunteers.

#### **Step Five: Declined Application**

If at any point in the process the Steering Committee chooses to decline the application, we may offer to the declined applicant that he/she can go to his/her monthly meeting to ask for a clearness committee that could result in a letter of recommendation for working with youth that we might consider at a later date.

## **SAYMA Child/Youth Worker Application**

See PDF document: "Youth Worker Volunteer App FINAL.pdf"

or

Online: <http://tinyurl.com/youthworkerapp>

## Reference Check Questions

1. How long have you known [applicant]?
  - What is the nature of your relationship?
2. Have you ever observed [applicant] interacting with [children/teens]?
  - In what capacity?
  - How would you describe [applicant's] abilities when interacting with [children/teens]?
3. In your history with the applicant, have you ever observed or known of anything in [applicant's] behavior or demeanor toward [children/teens] that made you uncomfortable?
  - Please describe: [Reference may not feel willing or able to do so. This is acceptable. Please note anything they say.]
4. Do you recommend [applicant] to work with [children/teens]: a) With no reservations. b) With some reservation [make note]. c) I can not make this recommendation at this time [make note].
5. Anything else you would like to add?

## **Pre-ESR Background Check Email**

Dear Friend,

Thank you for completing a SAYMA Child/Youth Worker Application form.

This form was the first step of a background check process that we are asking all volunteers with our JYM and SAYF programs to complete. We have contracted with Employment Screening Resources (ESR) to complete background checks. By using ESR's secure online service, you provide your personal information through their secure web link yourself, and there is no need to have information like your SSN and other personally identifying details sent through the mail or kept on file by SAYMA. This background check will search criminal and motor vehicle records.

In a few minutes you will receive an "alert" email from ESR that requests you complete a short online form with information that allows ESR to run the background check. This email will be long and contain a great deal of legal information (some that is applicable and some that is not) as well as a link to a secure website where you will be asked to enter personal information and a history of locations you have lived and worked. You have two weeks to complete this form, but we ask that you do it ASAP.

Once you have completed the ESR form, your background check will be completed in roughly 3-5 business days. Although it is not required by any states where SAYMA conducts business, we will send you a copy of your background check results in PDF format. If you DO NOT want your results sent to this email address, please reply and tell us how (or if) you want to receive your results.

We will also be contacting the references you provided on the Youth Worker Application.

Thank you for your patience while we navigate this new process, and thank you especially for your commitment to SAYMA's young people and their safety.

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

In service,

Liz Perch, SAYMA Administrative Assistant  
Jonah McDonald, SAYF Administrative Assistant

## **Post-ESR Background Check Email**

### **Accepted Application email:**

Dear Friend,

We have completed your background check process for working with SAYMA youth and you are approved as a volunteer/youth worker.

Your background check from Employment Screening Resources (ESR) is attached in PDF format.

Thank you for participating in this background check process and for your enthusiasm for supporting our Yearly Meeting's youth!

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

In service,

Liz Perch, SAYMA Administrative Assistant  
Jonah McDonald, SAYF Administrative Assistant

### **Flagged Application Email:**

Dear Friend,

Your background check from Employment Screening Resources (ESR) is attached in PDF format.

Aspect(s) of your application have been flagged and you will be contacted by a member of the SAYF Steering Committee very soon.

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

In service,

Liz Perch, SAYMA Administrative Assistant  
Jonah McDonald, SAYF Administrative Assistant