



## **PRESBYTERY OF NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND**

### **Background Check Policy**

**Purpose:** In order to protect our churches and the Presbytery, background checks are conducted on all clergy seeking membership in the Presbytery; all pastors currently serving PC(USA) churches, all candidates under care of the Presbytery; and all laity who serve as Commissioned Lay Pastors and certified Christian educators; General Presbyter, Stated Clerk, Treasurer; and all persons who have access to Presbytery funds.

**Scope of background check:** Investigation will include background, references, past employment, education, motor vehicles, and criminal or police records. Records maintained by both public and private organizations and national, state, county, and local governments will be checked. In addition, credit checks will be made on any person who has access to Presbytery funds.

**Procedure:** A release form will be required and the investigation is to be conducted prior to the:

- COM interview of clergy seeking membership in PNNE – either honorably retired or seeking a called position in a congregation or other validated ministry;
- COM interview of clergy from PCUSA or other denominations seeking temporary calls within the bounds of PNNE, certified Christian educators coming into Northern New England, and clergy recommended to serve as a Parish Associate;
- CPM vote to recommend an inquirer move to candidate status;
- CPM vote to recommend an elder for Commissioned Lay Pastor status;
- Council's recommendation of a person to serve in leadership of a fellowship or congregation under the care of the PNNE NCD Committee.
- PNNE Committee recommendation of an elder to become an officer of Presbytery or General Presbyter.
- General Presbyter's hiring of office staff that will have access to Presbytery funds.

**Confidentiality.** In order to assure confidentiality, the Stated Clerk will contract with an investigating agency to conduct the background check at the request of the General Presbyter, COM, CPM, Nominations, or Council. The information received will be analyzed by the Stated Clerk and General Presbyter, who will prepare a summary statement for the chair of the PNNE requesting organization. Any decisions stemming from the information obtained will be made with careful consideration, discerning God's will in prayer, and a conversation with the person on whom the background check was done. Files will be locked and maintained in the Presbytery Office.

**Expense.** The expense of the investigations will be charged to budgets of COM, CPM, Nominations, or Council, as appropriate.

Approved September 12, 2009

