

FAQs

What is Safe Gatherings?

Safe Gatherings is an abuse prevention and boundary awareness program. It incorporates an online application, electronic reference checks, 4 levels of background checks (including county of residence), and online abuse prevention training. Safe Gatherings makes it easy to track applicants through the process.

What is the Cost to Apply Through Safe Gatherings?

The price per person varies depending on the applicant's county, state and level of background check. All applications include national criminal background checks, sex offender registry check and current county of residence background check. We recommend an upgrade to a multi-county background check, which accounts for all U.S. addresses for the past 7 years.

Do Churches Pay an Annual Fee for the Safe Gatherings Program?

There is no cost to the church or organization to use Safe Gatherings. All costs are per applicant. The organization can choose to pay for all or part of an applicant's process.

What is the Training About, and How Does it Work?

The 2-hour online Safe Gatherings training empowers staff and volunteers through a greater awareness of the behaviors of sexual predators, types of abuse, signs of abuse, how to respond to abuse disclosure, mandatory reporting and more. The training can be taken from any computer or mobile device, and the course bookmarks progress to start up again where the user leaves off. Real scenarios provoke thinking, and the final exam tests on what the user has learned.

Who Should be Approved?

Everyone who works with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults should be screened and trained to work with those vulnerable populations. This includes leaders, staff and volunteers.

Is it a Time Burden on the Church Staff to use Safe Gatherings?

With the Safe Gatherings program, we do the work for you. We handle the reference checks and background checks through our system. Our customer care staff guides applicants and references through the process so you don't have to! Everything is handled through our secure system so your staff can free up time to conduct other church business.

What is the Turnaround Time to be Approved Through Safe Gatherings?

Approval times can vary. If the applicant completes the course in a timely manner and references respond quickly, they can receive approval notice in a few days. The most common delays are caused by references who do not take action after receiving the reference email. We take action to guide references through the process. Applicants can monitor their status at any time by logging in to Safe Gatherings.

How Long is Safe Gatherings Approval Valid?

Safe Gatherings approvals are valid for two years, unless customized requirements have been set for a specific organization.

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Who Receives Notification that an Applicant has Been Approved?

When an applicant completes the approval process, they receive an approval email. In addition, the primary administrator for that organization receives notification.

Why Would a Person's Application be Denied?

A criminal record does not absolutely mean that an applicant will be denied, but it's probable. Misrepresentation on an application is also grounds for rejection. Our first and foremost objective is to make sure children, youth and vulnerable adults are protected.

What if Some Members of an Organization do not have Internet Access?

Applicants who do not have internet access via a cell phone, tablet or home computer can use a computer at a library, a friend's house or one at the church or organization.

Does Safe Gatherings Write or Provide Policies?

Safe Gatherings does not write policies for churches and organizations, but we do have a useful product called Policy Builder that can help create, store and manage policies. Within Policy Builder, we have several policy templates to get you started.

What if Our Organization has Mission Trips and Camps With Applicants from Other States?

No problem! We can walk applicants through the process and make sure they are set up in the right place.

Is There a Minimum Age to be Safe Gatherings Approved?

Applicants must be 16 or older in order to be Safe Gatherings approved. Applicants under 18 must have parental permission to apply.

Can the Training be Taken in a Group Setting?

Applicants are reviewed and approved or denied on an individual basis. Each applicant has their own application, references and background checks ... and each applicant must pass the test at the end of the training. This system is not designed for a group setting.

How Long Does it Take for Our Organization to Get Set Up? Do We Need Training?

It takes less than a 5-minute phone call to set up your organization's account. Then, we can walk you through the easy process or send you a tutorial for your users. Our primary mission is to protect the vulnerable, but our secondary goal is to make having a protection program as easy as possible on the organization.

How Does My Organization Get Started With Safe Gatherings?

Have new users go to safegatherings.com and click on the red "New User" button at the top. Most churches and organizations are already set up in the Safe Gatherings system. When a person applies through a new organization, the Safe Gatherings staff contacts the organization to make sure the account is set up correctly regarding payment, the proper contacts, etc. If an applicant cannot find an organization in the system, they can call Safe Gatherings to get more information. After that, users and renewing users can click on the blue "Login" button.