

Frequently Asked Questions about Safe Environment

Below are the most frequently asked questions about the Diocesan Safe Environment program.
If you do not find an answer to your question, contact your parish, school, or
the Diocesan Safe Environment office.

- **What is “Safe Environment”?**
 - The Diocese of Pueblo has taken significant steps to create a safe environment and prevent the sexual abuse of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This includes a training program and conducting background checks for all clergy, all employees regardless of duties, and volunteers working with children and/or vulnerable individuals. As well as a separate training program for children and youth. For more information refer to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* that was adopted in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

- **What is the purpose of the Safe Environment program?**
 - The purpose of the Safe Environment Program and Training is to provide education and awareness on the topic of child sexual abuse.
 - **Adult training:** Is an online program designed to help employees and volunteers become aware of the signs of abuse, resources and how to promote safe environments for children and youth in their care.
 - **Youth training:** Is provided by catechists each year at the parish or school in a very carefully taught method to help youth recognize and protect themselves in unsafe situations. The Catholic Church are the only ones who offer this training in accordance with Catholic moral principles. This training helps children and youth to identify people grooming them and there is a system in place for their protection, which is supported by the diocese.

- **Who must be involved in this mission?**
 - Everyone must be involved. It is the responsibility of each one of us to promote and become involved in the protection of children. Sexual abuse prevention is our responsibility as parents, educators, church personnel, and volunteers.

- **How do I get involved in the protection of children?**
 - Today you are taking the first step by contributing your time and your support to maintaining a safe environment for children and young people.
 - Additional requirements include:
 - Complete a volunteer application.
 - Consent to a background check.
 - Complete Safe Environment training.

Contact your parish or school office to complete the screening process. All collected information is to be treated as confidential.

- **Who must attend a Safe Environment session?**
 - All clergy, all employees regardless of duties, and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable individuals must complete safe environment training as a condition of employment, ministry or service to the diocese.
 - Individuals will be notified by the Safe Environment Coordinator at their location when it is time to renew their training.
 - Safe Environment training is required to be renewed every five years.

- **Who needs to complete a background check?**
 - All clergy, all employees regardless of duties, and volunteers working with children youth or vulnerable individuals must consent to a background check as a condition of employment, ministry or service to the diocese.
 - The “Background Check” will be completed in accordance with the requirements of the “Background Investigation” consent form.
 - Background checks are required to be renewed every five years.

- **When do I need to renew my Safe Environment training or background check?**
 - Five years after you complete the Safe Environment training session your training will expire. Individuals will be notified by the Safe Environment Coordinator at their location when it is time to renew their background screening and/or take the refresher course. Both the background screening and Safe Environment training are required to be renewed every five years.

- **What if I have been screened already through another company diocese?**
 - The practice of the Diocese of Pueblo is to screen employees, volunteers and clergy using the screening process aligned with diocesan policies. Other entities screenings are not acceptable.

- **What if I have completed safe environment training through another diocese?**
 - Each diocese uses their own Safe Environment training program that is promulgated by each bishop; the training certificates are not transferable.

- **I am a youth volunteer; do I need to complete the background screening process?**
 - If you are under the age of 18 a background screening is not required.

Thank you for your commitment to keep our children, youth, and vulnerable individuals safe!