

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

United States West Area
47 East South Temple Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-1200

June 30, 2026

To: Area Seventy, Mission, Stake and District Presidents, Bishops and Branch Presidents in California

Re: California Background Check Law

Dear Brethren:

California law requires criminal background checks for all Church employees and volunteers who work with children or youth (anyone under 18) for at least 32 hours a year or 16 hours in a month. Recent changes to the law affect how these checks must be conducted. We appreciate your help in complying.

Leader Action Checklist

Please complete the following steps:

- ☐ Identify members in your unit who are required to complete a background check.
- ☐ Give each member the attached Member Information Sheet and Live Scan form and ensure they complete their background check.
- ☐ Give each member the attached Waiver form and obtain a signed copy from each member every time a background check is completed or renewed.
- ☐ Ensure each member completes the Church's Protecting Children and Youth Training at:
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/callings/safety/protecting-children-and-youth>.
- ☐ Upload and maintain each member's current Waiver form in Leader and Clerk Resources ("LCR").
- ☐ Ensure background checks and waivers are renewed every five years.

What is required?

A criminal background check is required for:

- Members who have not completed a background check and currently serve in callings that work with children or youth for at least 32 hours a year or 16 hours in a month.
- Members newly called to these positions before they begin serving.
- Members who have already completed a background check, but have passed the five-year mark since their last completion.

How do I implement this requirement?

1. Identify members in your unit who are required to complete a background check.
2. Give each member the attached Member Information Sheet.
3. Have the member complete and submit the attached Live Scan form. The Church has already completed the standard information on the form. The member only needs to provide the information specific to them.
4. Ensure the member signs the attached Waiver form when the background check is completed or renewed. Upload the current Waiver form to the member's tab on LCR.

What records must be kept?

California law requires each volunteer to sign the attached Waiver form authorizing the use of their background check results to determine eligibility to serve.

For state audit purposes, the Church must retain each member's current signed Waiver form. Please upload and maintain the current copy in the appropriate section of LCR.

Additional Information

Many units have arranged for mobile Live Scan providers to come to the meetinghouse so multiple members can complete the process at the same time. If several members in your unit need background checks, especially in remote areas, you may wish to consider this option.

The cost of background checks is paid by Church headquarters and should not be paid from local unit budgets.

Leaders and members must also complete the Church's Protecting Children and Youth Training at:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/callings/safety/protecting-children-and-youth>.

Questions or Concerns

Some members may have concerns about completing a background check. Please counsel with them in love and understanding and lead by example.

If you need assistance with a specific situation, please contact the Church Help Line at:

1-801-240-1911

or

1-800-453-3860, extension 2-1911.

Thank you for your continued service to the Lord.

Sincerely,

UNITED STATES WEST AREA PRESIDENCY

Elder Takashi Wada

Elder Peter M. Johnson

Elder Hugo E. Martinez

Background Check – Leader Information Sheet

“The Church’s position is that abuse cannot be tolerated in any form.” General Handbook § 38.6.2. California law requires Church members who work with minors for at least 32 hours per year (or 16 hours in a month) to undergo a criminal background check and sign a waiver allowing this information to be used to evaluate them as a volunteer. This information, set forth in a Q&A format, will help you implement this requirement in your unit. Thank you for your help in complying with this law and in protecting Heavenly Father’s children.

1. Who is required to get a background check?

Any volunteer who works with minors at least 32 hours in a year (or 16 hours in a month). This includes:

- Stake presidencies.
- Bishoprics and branch presidencies.
- Stake and ward primary workers.
- Stake and ward Young Men and Young Women leaders, advisors, instructors, and camp directors.
- Employees and volunteers of Church-owned and Church-run camps.
- Seminary teachers, administrators, and secretaries (including regular substitutes), and any other Church employees who work with youth.
- Stake Patriarchs.
- Temple workers.
- Any other person who may work with youth or children for 32 hours in a year or 16 hours in a month. This likely includes those participating in a pioneer trek and may include those serving as ministers with junior companions who are minors. A list of potential examples is available at:
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/callings/safety/protecting-children-and-youth/callings?lang=eng>.
- Church members who live in a neighboring state (Arizona, Nevada, Oregon), but attend a ward or branch located in California and serve in one of these callings should fulfill the background check and waiver requirements described in this document.
- (Background checks for FSY are handled by FSY).

Members will get a background check before being sustained and set apart.

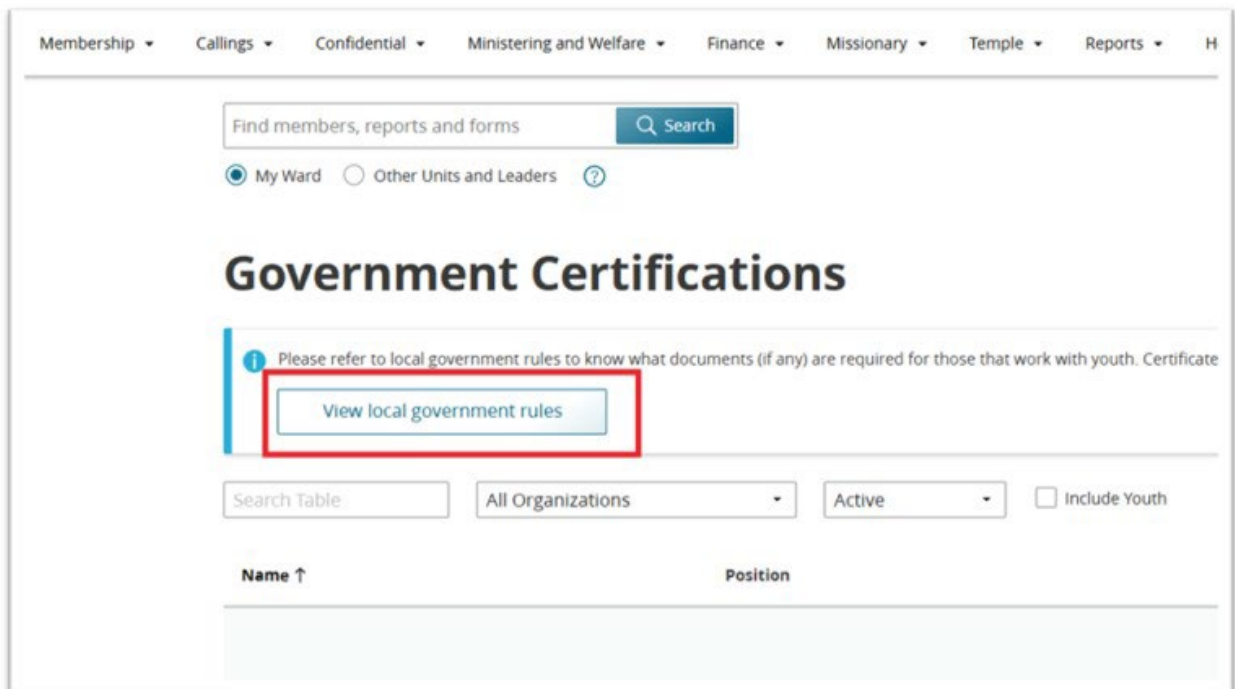
**This will not be possible for new stake presidencies (except where those called were previously screened). Members of newly called stake presidencies should promptly get a background check after being called.*

Members currently serving in these positions should complete the background check immediately if they have not already done so.

2. How does the process work?

When a Church leader extends a calling that requires a background check, he should check

the member's record in advance to see if the person has already completed a background check in the last five years. If the person has completed a background check in the last five years, there is no need to renew the check yet. If the person does not have a background check in the last five years, the leader who extends the calling should explain the need to get the background check *before* the person can be sustained and set apart. The leader should provide the person with the **California Background Checks – Member Information Sheet**, a copy of the **Request for Live Scan Services** (BCIA 8016VECHS) (“Request Form”), and the **CalVECHS Waiver Agreement for Release of Criminal Offender Record Information** (BCIA 9018) (“CalVECHS Waiver”) form. These documents are available on the Leader and Clerks Resources (“LCR”) website under the MEMBERSHIP→GOVERNMENT CERTIFICATIONS→VIEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT RULES menu option.



3. What should volunteers do with the Request Form?

For the Request Form, members fill out the Applicant Information portion of the form and take it to a Live Scan Services location to get fingerprinted. (Members who do not have a Social Security number or Driver's License number can leave those fields blank.) Find the Live Scan Services locations nearest you at the following website: <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations> or by Googling “Live Scan Services.” (Most are located in ordinary retail shops.) Live Scan submits the form to California, which sends the results to Church headquarters. Live Scan services are typically only available between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Some units have arranged with a mobile notary who has Live Scan access to come to their buildings and take fingerprints of large groups to reduce travel time and inconvenience for their members.

4. What “Level of Service” is required on the Request Form?

California law now requires a check at both the state and federal level. The Church has pre-checked both the DOJ and the FBI boxes on the Request Form. There is no need to re-do previous checks to comply with the new federal check. Each member will undergo both state and federal checks when it comes time to renew their background checks on the five-year renewal cycle.

5. What should volunteers do with the CalVECHS Waiver?

Each person subject to the background check requirement needs to fill out the CalVECHS Waiver whenever submitting the Request Form. They should provide the completed form to their unit clerk, who will upload a copy into LCR.

6. What should unit clerks do with the CalVECHS Waiver?

The Church has added a tab on California membership records to mark whether the member has been approved to work with minors. Upon receiving the CalVECHS Waiver, the unit clerk should upload it to each member's personal tab in LCR. Clerks should keep the most current CalVECHS Waiver on LCR until the member fills out a new one in connection with the five-year renewal cycle.

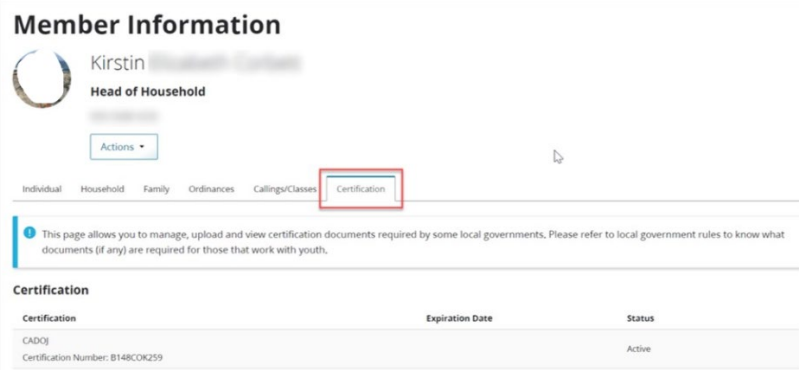
7. Who reviews background checks?

An individual at Church headquarters, approved by California as a Custodian of Records, will review the background check.

8. What does the Custodian of Records do with the information?

The Church has added a tab on California membership records to mark whether the member has been approved to work with minors. This tab is visible only to leaders and clerks. The custodian will mark the member as cleared/certified or not.

**Members who have moved in from other areas that require a certification may have those reflected on their records as well. California's certification will appear as CADOJ. The California certifications will not have a report attached to the record, but the CalVECHS Waiver should be stored on LCR.*



Member Information

Kirstin [redacted]
Head of Household

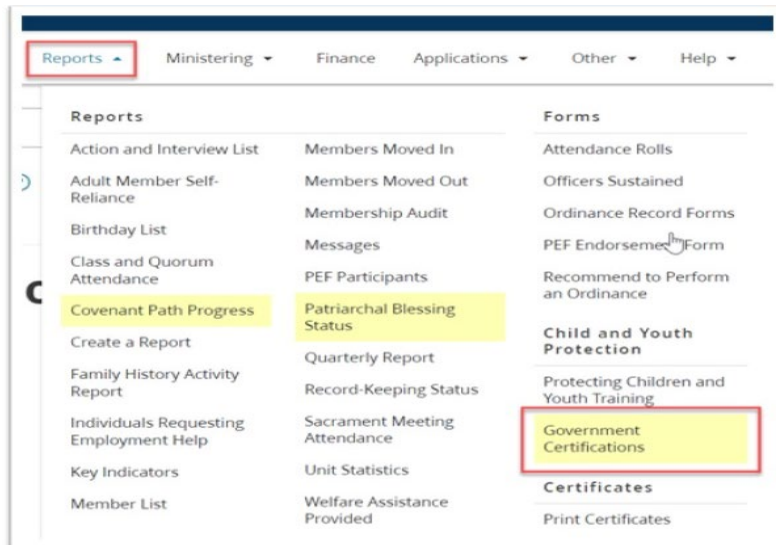
Actions ▾

Individual Household Family Ordinances Callings/Classes **Certification**

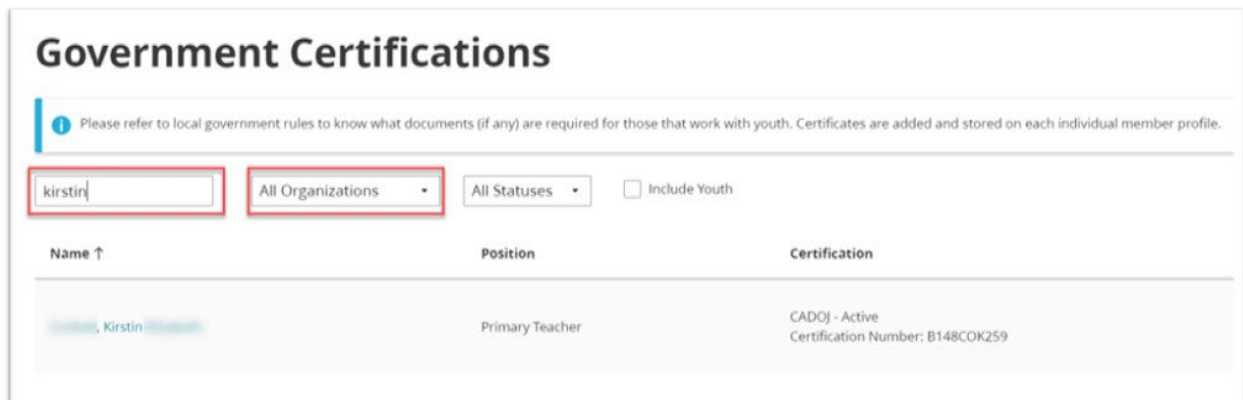
ⓘ This page allows you to manage, upload and view certification documents required by some local governments. Please refer to local government rules to know what documents (if any) are required for those that work with youth.

Certification	Expiration Date	Status
CADOJ Certification Number: B148COK259		Active

Leaders can run reports to check on the certification status of their members. Just click on the Government Certifications tab under Reports:



While the default view is a list of all members, leaders can search by member name or filter their search by organization (*e.g.*, Primary).



9. Will local units be notified when the background check is complete?

No. Because of the number of background checks and the logistics of the reporting system, the Church will not be able to send notices of new clearances. Stake presidents, bishops, or their clerks will have to check LCR for updates.

10. What are the requirements for record keeping and record retention?

If audited, units (wards, branches, or stakes) need to be able to demonstrate compliance with the law. In addition, it is critical that units safeguard all documentation since personal and sensitive information is contained in the background checks.

Clerks should keep the most current CalVECHS Waiver on LCR until the member fills out a new one in connection with the five-year renewal cycle. Authorized unit leaders can access LCR to ensure that records are accurate and up to date. Leaders should review the status reports available in the system regularly (at least monthly) to ensure that certifications are updated before they expire.

11. What crimes are captured by the background check?

- 1) Any felony conviction.
- 2) Sexual battery.
- 3) Sex offense against a minor.
- 4) Any crime requiring registration as a sex offender.
- 5) Willful harm or injury to a child within the previous 10 years.
- 6) Corporal punishment or injury of a child within the previous 10 years.
- 7) Crimes against elderly or dependent adults within the previous 10 years.
- 8) Robbery and burglary within the previous 10 years.

12. What crimes will keep a member from serving with minors?

Any sexual or violent offense against a child or adult. Other convictions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and review will emphasize child and member safety.

13. Is there a cost for the background check?

Yes. Live Scan locations will charge a fee. Wards and stakes should reimburse members for the fee. Members submit the receipt to a member of the bishopric or branch presidency. If necessary, funds can be advanced to members to cover the cost of the service. If funds are advanced, the member should provide proof of payment to the ward or branch clerk assigned to finances as soon as possible.

**To reimburse the member, the clerk enters the expense in LCR and selects the category "Reimbursed Expenses: Child Protection Clearances." The cost is covered by Church headquarters and does not affect the ward or branch budget. Leaders can call the Global Service Center (1-855-537-4357) if they have questions about payments or reimbursements.*

14. Do I need a new background check if I change wards or switch callings?

No. However, background checks done in connection with non-Church employment cannot be accessed by the Church. Consequently, members will need to be screened again for Church purposes.

15. Does the background check expire?

No. The background check itself does not expire under California law. However, the Church's policy is that volunteers should be checked at least once every five years, and they will have to submit the Request Form and CalVECHS Waiver again.

16. Is the background check private?

Yes. No one will see criminal history information except the designated Custodian of Records at Church headquarters who reviews it. If the report shows criminal history that would preclude the Church member from working with children, the Custodian of Records will discreetly notify the bishop or stake president.

17. Will the member be notified if he or she is not eligible to work with children?

Yes. The bishop or stake president will notify a member who is marked ineligible to work with minors. That member is entitled to request a copy of the background check report, which Church headquarters will provide upon request.

18. Can newly called members be sustained and set apart before getting clearance?

First, please be sure that membership records are reviewed, and prior priesthood leaders are consulted, consistent with Section 30.1.1 of the General Handbook. With limited exceptions, members should get a background check and be cleared *before* being sustained and set apart to work with minors. If an exception is sought, leaders should speak with the stake president who can contact the Helpline (1-800-453-3860, ext. 2-1911).

19. Does the background check replace other abuse prevention measures?

No. Leaders and members must comply with existing Church policies, including regular child abuse prevention training required by Section 38.6.2 of the Handbook. (See [ProtectingChildren.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).) Bishops should call the Helpline when they suspect abuse of any kind. Members should always report abuse to law enforcement and to the bishop. Experience shows that most perpetrators do not have any criminal history. “All members, especially parents and leaders, are encouraged to be alert and diligent and do all they can to protect children and others against abuse.” General Handbook § 38.6.2.

20. What about undocumented immigrants? How would they comply with background checks?

Disclosure of a social security number is voluntary and not required for the background check. Thus, members who are undocumented can still apply. The bishop or stake president should direct questions regarding the potential impact on undocumented immigrants in obtaining this background check to the Helpline.

21. What if a member refuses to undergo a background check?

There are many reasons a member might be reluctant to have a background check. You should counsel with them in love. Church members in California typically will not be allowed to work with minors without the background check. Questions should be directed to the Helpline.

If a member admits the background check will reveal a crime that makes him or her ineligible to work with minors, the bishop and stake president should rescind the calling, release the member if he or she is currently in a calling with minors, and submit a request in accordance with the second paragraph of Section 32.14.5, General Handbook, for that member’s record to be annotated. If a member’s record is already annotated, he or she should not be called to a position working with minors and therefore would not need a background check.