

Background:

In 2012, the Maine Area updated its Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements, which are mandatory by the World Service Office (WSO). As members discussed the changes in their groups, a request was made that the Area consider background checks as part of the safety process. Background checks are not required by the WSO, and at present only 50% of the Areas in North America use them. A Maine Area Task Force began researching background checks in 2013. The Task Force facilitated discussions with the Maine Area during the Assemblies held in 2013 & 2014. At those gatherings, members offered feedback regarding the direction the Task Force was pursuing.

After careful consideration of the feedback from the fellowship, the Task Force completed its work and now presents the following proposed motions for the fellowship to consider. These motions are the starting point to advance a fully informed group conscience discussion. Motion language may be modified as the discussion unfolds, or the Maine Area may decide to table the matter entirely.

Motion One:

Move to require all Maine Alateen Group Sponsors to have background checks, administered online, after the completion of the Maine Area Alateen Group Sponsor Application. *

Motion Two:

Move to contract with the National Center For Safety Initiatives (NCSI) as the vendor conducting the following checks: Motor Vehicle Record; Criminal History; Sex Offender Registry; County Search.**

Motion Three:

Move to require that the cost for these checks (\$49/applicant, covers two years of checking) to be paid on a biennial basis by the following in this descending order:

- The group sponsoring the Alateen meeting;
- The District in which the Alateen meeting is located;
- The Area, only after multiple fundraisers are held at the group & district levels.

Motion Four:

Move to add the following criteria to the standard NCSI background check:***

"convictions for crimes involving alcohol, disorderly conduct, terrorizing, violation of any court protection order, or stalking."

Motion Five:

Move to add the following to the Maine Area Alateen Group Sponsor Application:****

"I hereby authorize NCSI to conduct a comprehensive criminal history records check, a sex offender registry check and a driving record check in connection with this application."

Notes:

*Most, if not all, of those who apply to be sponsors, read the requirements and fill out the application form knowing that a background check will be conducted will only complete the application form if they are extremely, if not 100%, confident that they will pass. As a result, those who have disqualifying records will self-select themselves out of the process before any background check would be conducted. This eliminates wasting money for background checks on applicants who did not qualify anyway based on their responses in the standard application, or on those with disqualifying records who self-selected out of continuing with the process.

**State of Maine Motor Vehicle Records Check will be a standard three-year operator's license check, including commercial operator's license, if applicable.

National county search is the county of longest & most recent residency within the past five years. All 3,000 counties in the U.S. are available via the NCSI system. Applicants identify ONE county of residency, and then NCSI verifies the applicant's identity and any trial court records that exist in that **singular county**. All crime in the U.S. is initially reported at the county level, through the trial court system, usually within 24-48 hours. Verifying identity is done via national databases (ie: Fed-X) rather than fingerprinting.

Sex offender search is done via the 50-state national registry.

***At the 2014 Spring Assembly a detailed crimes list was presented to the GRs. After reviewing the list with a legal expert in the fellowship, it was determined that it is all but impossible to come up with a comprehensive crimes list that covers every state of the U.S. and foreign countries. Even if a list could be compiled, frequent changes in criminal laws would make such a list incomplete almost immediately.

****The legal expert in our fellowship was impressed by the confidentiality of the NCSI system so that, within 10 days of receiving the application, NCSI would determine whether the person's record meets their search criteria. The Maine Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) would be notified only that the applicant is either approved or not via a simple "Red Light/Green Light." No further information is provided to the AAPP. In addition, NCSI keeps an applicant's records for the duration of the contract or as required by law. That provision would keep any trusted servant in Al-Anon from having the responsibility of securing any member's criminal history records.

