

FAQs – Background Checks

Club members participating in any project working with youth are required by SIA to complete background checks and complete the required training.

Which club members need background checks?

All club members involved in any project working with youth need to complete a background check and the required training. If some club members are not involved in a youth-focused project, they do not need to complete background checks or the required training. Clubs will be asked to report whether club members involved in projects working with youth completed background checks.

How does our club know what background checks we need to complete?

Clubs should consult state regulations, local school districts, and/or community partner organizations to determine what background checks are required to work with youth in your location. Within the United States, state websites (.gov) often include state background check regulations.

Is there a cost for completing background checks? Who is responsible for paying?

There is a cost associated with background checks. They are funded by the club as part of participating in the project working with youth.

How can our club complete background checks?

SIA recommends the background check vendor [Hire Image](#), but clubs are welcome to use another source.

What is the turnaround time for the SIA recommended agency to complete background checks?

Turnaround time will vary depending on the requirements of your state and/or community partner. Some clearances return results within minutes. Some results may take between two days and one week to be returned.

Are background checks necessary only if our club is participating in *Dream It, Be It*, or do we need background checks for any project working with youth?

Background checks are necessary for any project working with youth, including *Dream It, Be It*. While Soroptimist clubs have been working with youth for years, SIA is responding to the changing environment within the US where it has become a best practice for any organization conducting youth programming to complete background checks on behalf of those working with youth. For SIA to properly manage our organizational risk and to ensure the safety of our members and the youth participating in Soroptimist projects, we are now required by our insurance carrier to complete background checks and keep the records on file indefinitely.

Clubs who are already working with youth shouldn't halt their existing programs. They should begin the process of completing background checks and the required training for members involved in those projects to protect themselves and the children.

Do guest speakers or outside facilitators (ex: counselors, educators, business women) need the background checks and training that are required of SIA?

No, they do not. Since outside facilitators will have limited interaction with youth, it is not necessary for them to complete background checks and the required training.

Do other volunteers need the background checks and training that are required of SIA?

Yes. Volunteers who are actively engaging on-site with girls need to complete background checks and the required training.

Many clubs have existing partnerships where a schoolteacher or organization staff member is present during club activities; do these club members still have to complete the training modules and background check?

All members working closely with youth will need to complete the background check and training procedures. A working relationship with a present and trusted adult, such as a teacher or staff member, increases the level of safety for both youth and members in this situation, but SIA does not have the capacity to examine each instance. Therefore, to ensure everyone's safety and to meet requirements provided by SIA's insurance, all members working with youth will need to complete the procedures.

I am already subject to background checks because of my current job or other volunteer opportunity; do I need to do it again?

No. If members already have current background checks, they do not need to complete the process again. Each club should maintain records of members' background checks (with a photocopy of confirmation records if the background check is on file somewhere else). Members with current background checks must still complete the required documents and training provided by SIA.

Our club is supporting another club's *Dream It, Be It* project/project that works with youth; do our members need to complete background checks and required training procedures?

Club members who are actively engaging on-site with girls need to complete background checks and the required training. If some of your club members are supporting another club's *Dream It, Be It*/youth project by being present at the sessions, those club members will need to complete background checks and the required training. If your club is supporting another club's *Dream It, Be It*/youth project by sending financial help, providing in-kind donations, or supporting in any other off-site manner, your club members will not need to complete background checks and the required training.

Our club completed our background checks; now what?

The club treasurer should track member completion of background checks and the required training, and request copies of completed background checks to keep filed in a secure location.

How often does our club need to complete background checks?

Club members should refer to and follow their state guidelines to see how often their state requires re-screening. Some states require adults working with youth to complete background checks yearly; other states do not. Approved background checks are valid for no more than ten years.

What happens if an incident occurs?

Refer to the [SIA Standards for Working with Youth](#) for information on how to respond to suspected injury, abuse, or molestation.

If you have other questions about the process that are not answered above, SIA headquarters can help. Please send your questions to program@soroptimist.org.