

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

Has Church Leadership Taken These Steps Upon Learning of an Allegation?

For many years, Tennessee Baptists have shown their concern for helping churches protect those vulnerable to sexual abuse. In recent years training to prevent sexual abuse has been provided to several hundred churches. TBMB age-group specialists have consulted with countless churches and associations to develop church practices that actively protect children and youth. All TBMB staff members completed Sexual Abuse Training through Ministry Safe, and TBMB Human Resources staff negotiated discounted background screening rates for TBMB churches through ClearStar.

In 2019 TBMB began a particular effort to provide even more information and encouragement to churches to develop systems that protect the vulnerable and respond appropriately. A task force was developed comprised of Baptist physicians, therapists, student and children's ministers, and pastors to prayerfully and carefully develop increased resources for Tennessee Baptist Churches. Professionals and governmental agencies were consulted and resources were studied.

The information this task force gathered is provided here. We believe it is a starting place for church leaders who care, a foundational opportunity for churches to review the safety provided to those who enter their property and attend their ministry events. We do not believe these resources are exhaustive and encourage churches to be in conversation with local professionals who can help review systems and procedure. TBMB staff members continue to be available to confer directly with church leaders who reach out for assistance and support.

Tennessee Baptist Churches giving through the *Cooperative Program* and the *Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions* make TBMB ministries possible.