



## About

The Rio Texas Annual Conference is committed to the well-being of every person entrusted to its care as well as those persons entrusted to the care of the districts and local United Methodist Churches throughout our conference borders. Thus, we are devoted to establishing safe environments for all of God's children. Our safety policy and procedures are instrumental in fulfilling this sacred and challenging mission. As an integral part of this commitment, the Rio Texas Conference partners with [Safe Gatherings](#) to oversee our certification process for safe ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. You can find the steps for certification at [riotexas.org/safesteps](http://riotexas.org/safesteps).

## Safe Gatherings

Safe Gatherings is an online abuse prevention program that screens and educates staff and volunteers to help prevent abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in group settings. When employees and volunteers are trained to identify potential abusers, recognize the signs of abuse, and know how to handle reporting, they are better equipped to prevent abuse.

When using Safe Gatherings, upon successful completion of the application, background and reference checks, and the online training program, each applicant will receive documentation of approval valid for two years, and will have continued access to the online training program for an entire year.

The price per applicant for our individual church program available through the Safe Gatherings website is \$39. Rio Texas Conference churches and ministries are asked to pay \$15 towards the cost of the individual background screening. Churches and/or applicants may choose to pay the entire \$39 if they would like to help subsidize the cost of this important ministry.

This fee includes processing of three electronic references, a national and county of residence 7-year background check, national and state of residence Sex Offender Registry check, and the online abuse prevention and boundary awareness training. If applicants need a driving record check, there will be an additional \$10.50 charge.



## Details

### Church/Organization Account Set-up:

1. Contact [Safe Gatherings](#) via phone (888.241.8258) or email (info@safegatherings.com) to confirm your contact information and finalize the set-up of your [Safe Gatherings](#) Administration account. Your administration account will help you track your staff's and volunteer's certification process, approval status, and recertification date.
2. A [tutorial](#) is available to help you set up your administration account. Check out this [tutorial](#) at: [riotexas.org/safesteps](http://riotexas.org/safesteps)
3. If you have questions contact [Safe Gatherings](#) at the phone/email above or ask Tanya: tcampen@riotexas.org.
4. Invite your staff and volunteers to register with [Safe Gatherings](#) and complete the three step certification process. A [tutorial](#) is available to help your staff and volunteers set-up their individual accounts and begin their certification process. Check out this [tutorial](#) at: [riotexas.org/safesteps](http://riotexas.org/safesteps)

### Individual Application and Certification:

1. Register at <https://safegatherings.com/app/registration>
2. Fill out the online application
3. View and complete Safe Gatherings online training
4. [Attend TRUSTed con Confianza training](#)
5. login to account at any time to check the status of their application.

Note: All churches in the Conference are already set up in Safe Gatherings. Applicants must correctly choose the denomination, state and city where your church is located, and the church will display in a drop-down menu as you begin the application process. If you are clergy- you should select **Clergy, San Antonio** in this organization drop-down menu.



## **Tips for completing process:**

Applicants should:

1. Take the [Safe Gatherings](#) training as soon as possible upon application submission
2. Inform their references so they will be responsive to calls and/or emails from [Safe Gatherings](#).
3. Verify the references contact information as up to date and current.
4. Monitor progress by logging into their [Safe Gatherings](#) account

Church leadership should:

1. Make sure staff and volunteers understand the [3 step certification process](#)
2. Check their church's [Safe Gatherings](#) account regularly to monitor progress of their ministry leaders
3. Respond to any reference requests from [Safe Gatherings](#) as soon as possible (references take an average of 2-3 minutes to complete)

## **Contact**

Contact the Safe Gatherings team at [contact@safegatherings.com](mailto:contact@safegatherings.com) or (888) 241-8258 for additional information or with questions about the program.

## **Start the process**

Click here to start the Safe Gatherings process - <https://safegatherings.com/app/registration>

Click here to log in to your Safe Gatherings application after you have completed your registration - <https://safegatherings.com/app/login>