



CARROLL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECK PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND CHECK

The purpose of the Department of Recreation and Parks' Background Check Program is to ensure that every individual who interacts with children, elderly, mentally challenged etc. undergoes a criminal history records check. The objective is to make communities safe, provide a safe and positive experience for the participants and review an individual's background prior to their participation.

While no screening process can grant absolute assurances, knowing an individual's criminal background can provide greater certainty that an individual with a documented history of inappropriate behavior will not be able to volunteer with or have access to our participants. A parents or guardians watchful eye is still our greatest resource to keep our children and special populations safe.

II. CARROLL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS POLICY

Consistent with Carroll County Department of Recreation and Parks Advisory Board's recommendation, the department will follow the recommended volunteer management guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) for credentialing volunteers. The guidelines call for an annual comprehensive background screening or background check to include:

1. Social Security Verification
2. Address Trace
3. State or County Criminal Record Check
4. National Criminal History Data Base search
5. Sex Offender Registry
6. Timely results
7. Complimentary Consultation

As of February 15, 2016, volunteers required to undergo a background check are required to follow this annual process. The fact that someone was cleared for a background check once does not ensure they will never commit a serious crime in the future. This includes any volunteer previously cleared or utilized as a volunteer by Carroll County Department of Recreation and Parks, local Recreation Council, or council sponsored program.

III COLLECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

To protect the confidentiality of the volunteer, personal identifiable information will not be collected or maintained by the department. Volunteers will submit all person information to a third party vendor that will conduct the screening process.

The Department will receive background results to determine volunteer status. Volunteers not approved will receive the following information:

1. Fair Credit Reporting Act – Summary of Rights
2. Letter of disqualification
3. Copy of actual screening report

To ensure 100% compliance, the Department of Recreation and Parks will distribute volunteer credentials (ID's) to all approved volunteers. They will be required to wear these volunteer badges anytime they volunteer within a program/activity.

IV. CRITERIA FOR EXCLUSION

A person shall be disqualified and prohibited from serving as a volunteer if they have been found of the following crimes:

SEX OFFENSES

- **All Sex Offenses** – Regardless of amount of time since offense.

FELONIES

- **All Felony Violence** – Regardless of the amount of time since offense (*Examples include murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated Burglary etc.*).
- **All Felony offenses** – Other than violence or sex, within the past 10 years (*Examples include drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment, etc.*).

MISDEMEANORS

- **All misdemeanor violence** offences within the past 7 years (*Examples include simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run, etc.*).
- **Two (2) or more misdemeanor drug & alcohol offenses** within the past 7 years (*Examples include driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.*).
- **Any other misdemeanor** within the past 5 years that would be considered a potential danger to children or is directly related to the functions of that volunteer (*Examples include contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, theft – if the person handles monies, etc.*).

V. OPEN CHARGES

An individual with open charges, either felony or misdemeanor, shall be prohibited from participation in any capacity. It is the responsibility of the individual to notify the Department of Recreation and Parks as to the judgment of the court.

VI. SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK

- Maryland Statewide Criminal Search.
- Social Security Number Trace and Address Locator Database
- US Criminal Records Indicator

VII. TIME FRAME FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK

All reported arrest and conviction information which is readily available at the courts and which is legally reportable under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act and state reporting laws is accessible to the Department of Recreation and Parks.

VIII. PERSONS REQUIRED TO UNDERGO A CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK

The following matrix is provided to assist community leaders in determining who must undergo a criminal history records check prior to participating (i.e. before the first practice for coaches or the first meeting leaders) in a youth activity or program. This list serves as a guide and is not all-inclusive.

VOLUNTEER POSITION OR TITLE COMMENT REQUIRED

- **Organizational Officers & Board Members:** for any group that sponsors youth activities
- **Youth Sport Commissioners & Board Members:** for any group that sponsors youth activities
- **Head and Assistant Coaches:** for all County/Recreation Council Sponsored youth leagues, clinic and travel/select teams
- **Transportation Providers:** Volunteers in a program support role that regularly transport youth or special population participants
- **Instructors and Assistant Instructors** for all youth or special population programs
- **Volunteers / Event Workers:** in Care Custody or Control of Children or special populations
- **Single Day Volunteers:** Are not required to have a background check completed

NOTE: All paid staff and independent contractors with care custody, control or access to children or special populations will undergo criminal background checks in accordance with the Maryland Family Law Article. To complete this check, please contact your community coordinator.

IX. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE

Recreation Council Executive Board and/or Program Commissioners of the program or activity are responsible to ensure all required volunteer positions have received clearance to volunteer.

X. COMPLETED AND UPDATED BACKGROUND CHECKS

A list of individuals with completed and cleared criminal history records checks can be verified by the Bureau of Recreation. All adult leaders of youth or special populations programs or activities are required to complete an updated criminal history records check a minimum of every year. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep their status updated.

Full time employees of the department, who have already been fingered printed, will not be required to undergo this yearly check if they volunteer with a program or activity.

XI. VOLUNTEER PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

Anyone being cleared to volunteer or work with youth or special population programs will be required to provide a current picture to the Bureau of Recreation and a photo ID badge will be issued and must be displayed at all times while supervising all youth or special populations programs, activities or events. This badge is not to be worn for any other purpose.

- If a photo ID badge is lost or stolen, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to notify a supervisor as soon as possible to obtain a replacement badge.
- The photo ID badge will be issued to all volunteers after the completion of a comprehensive background check and will expire one year from the date of issuance.
- The photo ID badge is the property of Carroll County Department of Recreation and Parks and must be returned upon service completion or termination.
- It is the duty of every qualified volunteer to report individuals failing to properly display their qualifying credentials to their supervisor.

XII. CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the Bureau of Recreation regarding a change of address. If mail is returned to the Department as “undeliverable”, the volunteer will be inactivated for the purposes of the Background Check Program and removed from the eligibility list.

XIII. APPEALS

If an individual disputes the accuracy or completeness of any information reported in the criminal history records check, they have a right to request a reinvestigation, unless the dispute is deemed frivolous. Information on this process may be obtained by contacting the Background Check Program Coordinator. Once the accuracy of the Criminal History Records Check is confirmed, individuals prohibited from participating in youth or special population programs or activities based on the findings of this check have no right of appeal.

XIV. EXPUNGED RECORDS

An individual is not required to disclose information regarding criminal charges or convictions that have been expunged by the courts. An individual whose criminal convictions were expunged after being prohibited from participation should provide the Department with written evidence of the court’s actions.

XV. BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS

To initiate a criminal history records check, the individual must complete and sign an Authorization and Release for the Procurement of an Investigative Report form. This form will be completed on-line. To complete the background check online, go to:

https://ssci2000.secure-screening.net/escreening/OApp_LoginEntrance.asp?mode=direct&code=450500

Under no circumstances is an individual in those designated volunteer positions authorized to participate in any youth or special populations program or activity in any capacity prior to the completion of his or her criminal history records check.

Organizational leaders must check with the Bureau of Recreation to ensure all adult volunteers have completed a criminal history records check prior to participating (i.e. .before the first practice for coaches or the first meeting for leaders). The requests and subsequent reports are transmitted over a secure website with restricted rights of access. If a criminal history records check comes back disclosing a criminal conviction that would prohibit an individual from volunteering, the individual will be notified by CCSI. The Department’s Background Check Program Coordinator (or designee) will contact the Recreation Councils Executive Board and Program Coordinator to preclude the individual from participating with the community youth program or activity.

XVI. ADMINISTRATION/COST/DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

It is the responsibility of each organization that participates in County-sponsored activity to fully comply with this Policy and the Background Check Program. Compliance will be administered by the Bureau of Recreation.

The cost of the volunteer background check program will be funded by the following means:

1. Annual contribution from Bureau of Recreation operating budget
2. Revenue generated from additional program registration fee surcharge added to Community Recreation programs
3. Revenue generated from additional program registration fee surcharge collected by Recreation Council programs and submitted to department

As part of a Recreation Council accreditation process, each organization must sign an annual acknowledgment of the receipt of and adherence to departmental policies. Organizations and/or their members that knowingly or unknowingly violate the County's policy or Background Check Program are subject to disciplinary measures that may include, but is not limited to:

1. Loss of accreditation;
2. Restrictions on facility usage
3. Loss of volunteer liability coverage