

Screening Volunteers:

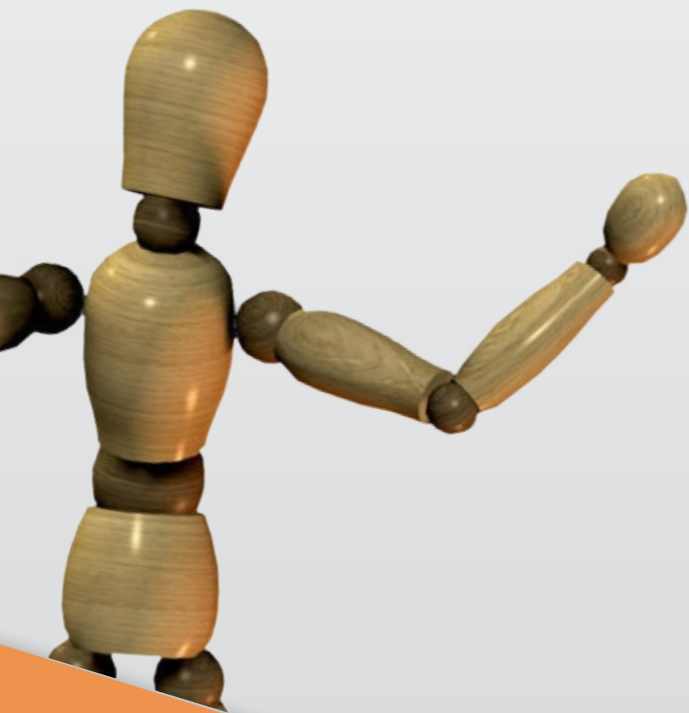
Four Tips For Success

Why Screen Volunteers?

Volunteers are the backbone of non-profit organizations; unfortunately, with daily stories that push headlines like “Volunteer Arrested,” organizations must begin to diligently protect their cause and members.

From concerns of child endangerment to financial misconduct, properly vetting volunteers is a necessary provision. One part of that vetting process should be background checks, which can provide a vital first defense for your organization.

Volunteer screening does have its challenges, and many organizations are overwhelmed by the budgetary, compliance and administrative burdens that accompany a background check program. Adhering to these tips for success can help alleviate these challenges, creating an effective, successful program.



1. Set Clear Policies

Unnecessary conflict can arise when clear policies on background checks are not set. Policies should be drafted in a formal document and followed consistently, which means screening all prospective volunteers, regardless of how well you “know” him or her. Only screening certain individuals can expose your organization to legal liability.

Your policy should include the protocols of completing the background screen as well as what offenses would preclude volunteer participation. Sharing this information in advance will act as a screen in itself. This may be a deterrent for some volunteers, but it can actually be an ideal opportunity to start a dialogue with those with past offenses. Addressing any issues upfront rather than later allows for open communication.



2. Streamline Your Process

By partnering with a reputable background screen provider, the review of results and management of notifications (Approvals, Adverse Letters, Dispute Resolution) can be greatly simplified.

Further enhancing efficiency, the provider should have a web based system allowing for personnel to review and track the screen process. With the provider facilitating volunteer “pass” determinations, administrators should only need to review those reports with serious policy prohibitive offenses.

The background screen provider should have procedures in place to protect the applicant’s personal data. The vendor should also help keep you compliant with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) by initiating the proper communication to those individuals who do not meet your requirements. Remember, FCRA does not distinguish between paid and volunteer employment!



3. Understand Screening Methodology



All background screens are not created equal. Misinformation about background checks is rampant, and many organizations are operating under a false sense of security. If your current search parameters are exclusively a “national” database or Sex Offender Registry, you could be placing your organization at risk.

The use of the term “national” is misleading, as there is no single database that receives and aggregates data from every U.S. court.

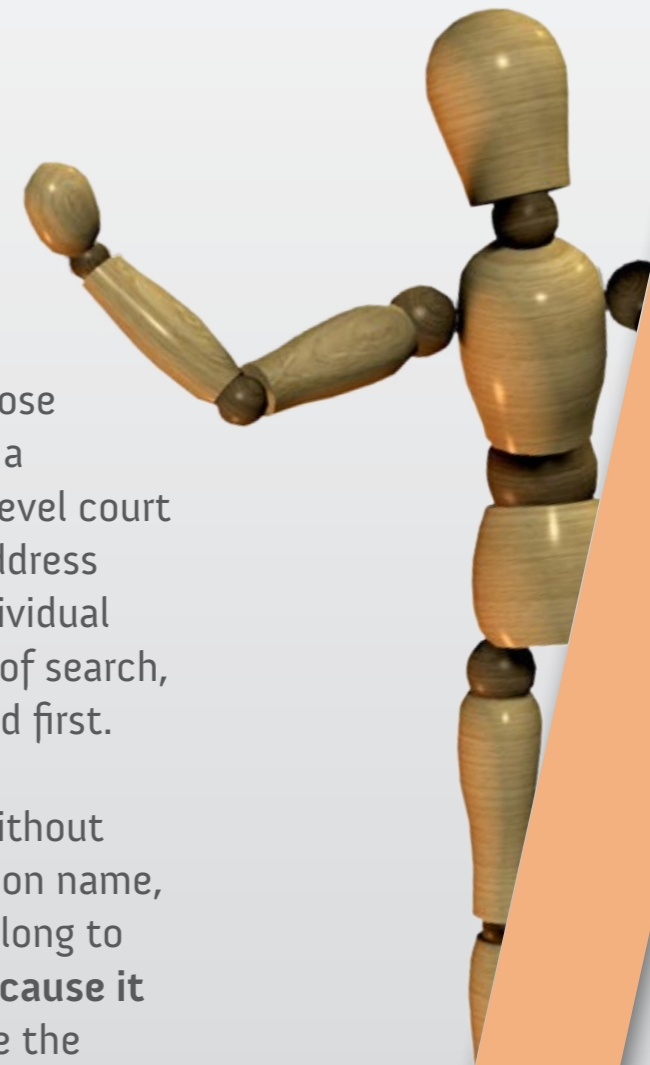
Understanding the sources of the data used to perform searches is imperative. Utilizing a best practices approach to screening provides you with a complete and reliable picture of an individual’s criminal history.

4. The Verification Trap

When some vendors promote a “national” screen, they use language like verified or adjudicated. Utilizing this language allows these vendors the ability to answer yes when questioned about searching county courts.

There is a fundamental difference in search methodology between those vendors and BIB. The difference is that these types of vendors utilize a national database to find criminal hits then follow up with a county level court search to verify the records. This type of search is not based on an Address History Trace, which creates the jurisdictional profile of where an individual has lived and/or worked for at least the last seven years. In this type of search, which is the process used by BIB, the county level courts are searched first.

Some vendors simply send you any “hits” from a national database without verification. If you are performing a search on someone with a common name, expect to receive pages of arrest information that may or may not belong to the applicant. **False positives are just as bad as missing records because it could erroneously preclude an excellent candidate** as well as erode the confidence you and your organization have in your screening program.



What is a Reliable Screen?

Address History Trace (AHT): This is a report revealing names, DOBs and addresses associated with a specific Social Security number. An AHT should go back at least seven years.

Why it's important: *An AHT creates a profile of an individual's residence history; this profile determines what jurisdictions should be searched.*

County Searches: Based on the profile created from the AHT, each jurisdiction/county identified is searched.

Why it's important: *County courts are the official court of record as most cases are filed and maintained here, meaning the most complete and accurate information is generally located here.*

Criminal Record Database: A database search of over 450 million criminal records regularly collected from thousands of sources.

Why it's important: *Supplementing a county search with databases casts a wider net and helps find more records.*

National Sex Offender Search: A comprehensive, real-time search of registered sex offender registries in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Why It's important: *Searching every available sex offender registry in real-time provides maximum protection from registered sex offenders gaining access to your organization.*

AKAs: can include maiden names, nicknames or aliases.

Why It's important: *Everyone doesn't always use the same name! Having as many possible names to search increases your chances of finding records.*

About BIB

BIB offers background screening with integrity. We screen, test and verify the backgrounds of your employees and volunteers. Clients love our responsive service and how we accelerate their speed to hire while reducing their costs. With BIB, you get reliable results and easy technology. We're good at what matters and have been since 1995. BIB is a founding member of NAPBS and a member of SHRM, AASPA, NACBA, ASA and NRPA.

About Secure Volunteer

Secure Volunteer is a web based, turnkey platform for screening volunteers. Volunteers enter their own data, removing paper forms from the process. Secure Volunteer manages who has been screened and when, facilitates the approval process, provides a professional grade screen and supplies approved volunteers with ID cards. With Secure Volunteer, organizations screen better and quicker without sacrificing quality or breaking their budgets.

Learn more at www.SecureVolunteer.com

