Why Screen Volunteers?

**Volunteers are just like any other staff member that** comes into your nonprofit organization. They are usually unknown, unpredictable and will do the unexpected while working for your NPO. It’s important to **know as much as you can about each volunteer** before they can cause harm and it’s vital to the safety and strength of the organization to use the **same background screening procedures you use for employees**.

**Why is it Important to Screen Volunteers?**

**To Protect the People You Serve:** This is the most important reason to **screen volunteers**—to keep dangerous people away from your clients. Adults who work with kids or teens, elderly caregivers and home visitation volunteers should always undergo **background screening**.

**To Limit Liability:** If your NPO serves the public, the entire **organization is at risk** whenever and wherever a **volunteer** is placed—especially with **at-risk populations** such as children or the elderly. If harm is done to a member of the public, the NPO could be held **liable for a volunteer’s behavior**. **Thorough background screening** will **weed out volunteers** with arrests or other **criminal activities** in their pasts.

**Because it Could be Mandatory:** Nonprofits that depend on federal and state funding are usually required to perform **background screening on employees and volunteers**.

**To Protect the Organization’s Reputation:** **Volunteer screening** allows a nonprofit to enjoy a **good reputation in the community**, which can lead to more support. Having a “loosey-goosey” approach to placing volunteers can harm an NPO’s standing in the community.

**To Discourage Predators:** Often, just knowing your organization conducts **background screening** will be enough to keep away volunteers who might be seeking **inappropriate contact with children**. Conversely, a no-screening policy could look like an **open invitation** to offenders and predators to come right in and start working with vulnerable populations.

**Volunteer managers and nonprofit organizations** are vulnerable to financial loss and inappropriate or **dangerous behavior of volunteers**. **Criminal background screening** on all volunteers can **protect your organization, staff, and clientele from harm**.