

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**.