



200.50

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCREENING ADULT VOLUNTEERS

In addition to the policies outlined in policy #200.10, the following steps can help create and maintain a safe environment for both children and adults.

1. Develop Policies and Procedures

Comprehensive policies help ensure that potential volunteers are treated fairly and that procedures are used consistently. Policies also help to provide continuity to a program.

Parish policies might include information about how volunteers will be screened – whether by application, interview, or a combination – what kind and the minimum number of references that will be required. Additionally, evaluation, dismissal, separation, and grievance processes could be outlined.

2. Create Volunteer Position Descriptions

Detailed position descriptions allow potential volunteers to determine whether an opportunity fits their interests, skills, and schedule. Additionally, volunteer administrators may use the position description to screen candidates based upon the basic qualifications needed for placement, including a clean police record.

3. Ask Volunteers to Complete an Application

A thorough written application can be a valuable screening tool. An application can help determine a volunteer's attitudes toward children, child abuse, and volunteering in general. An application may ask for personal information including name, address, phone, e-mail, social security number; emergency contact information; recent employment/volunteer information; areas of interest and availability; driver's license/insurance information when appropriate; medical conditions or special needs; references; inquiries to past felonies and/or misdemeanors. Ask potential volunteers for their signature to affirm that they have given truthful information.



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4. Conduct Interviews

Conducting interviews can be especially helpful when placing individuals interested in volunteer positions. Effective interviewing techniques include open-ended questions, good listening skills, and a clear understanding of the questions interviewers are permitted to ask under existing federal and state regulations.

5. Ask for References and/or Endorsements

References help organizations confirm personal and professional information provided by the potential volunteer and offer an objective opinion of that person's qualifications. For activities that call for regular unsupervised access, organizations might require volunteers to give at least two non-related references. For decentralized activities, seeking endorsement/approval from a person who is well acquainted with the volunteer will provide additional information. It's important to document all contacts.