

**FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY
AGENDA REPORT**

DATE: 5/8/2018
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Kerry Cochran
MEETING: May. 12, 2018
ITEM: New Business
SUBJECT: Volunteers Background Policy

Volunteers Background Policy

The Feather River Rail Society is concerned about the safety of its volunteers, constituents (staff, community, etc.) and the protection of its assets and reputation. To address these concerns volunteers of Feather River Rail Society must undergo background screens, which shall comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (“FCRA”), in order to volunteer with Feather River Rail Society.

The Feather River Rail Society has selected Verified Volunteers an independent third party to conduct background screens (“Background Screener”). Information on Verified Volunteers can be found at: <https://www.verifiedvolunteers.com/>.

Our legal staff of Porter/Simon has reviewed the background screening policy and the contract with Verified Volunteers and has had both email and telephone contact with both verified volunteers and myself and has approve the policy and the company.

I therefore submit the new policy to the Board of Directors for consideration.

ACTION: Review this meeting, and approve



FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY POLICY

Volunteer Background Screening

Effective Date: 6/1/2018

Legal Review Date: 4/13/2018

Next Review Date: 6/1/2020

Replaces: New

1. Purpose

This Volunteer Background Screening Policy (“Policy”) sets forth the policy for performing background screens on volunteers.

The Feather River Rail Society is concerned about the safety of its volunteers, constituents (staff, community, etc.) and the protection of its assets and reputation. To address these concerns volunteers of Feather River Rail Society must undergo background screens, which shall comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (“FCRA”), in order to volunteer with Feather River Rail Society.

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Any questions or special considerations concerning this Policy should be directed to the volunteer manager or the general superintendent.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all prospective and current volunteers (with rescreens occurring every seven years (7) after initial check).

3. Obtaining Consent and Cost for the Background Screen

Upon receipt of a volunteer’s application to volunteer with Feather River Rail Society, he or she will be informed that selection is subject to meeting the requirements of background screens. The volunteer will then be provided a Disclosure and Authorization form, which requests information, including personal information, which the Background Screener requires to conduct the background screens. The personal data and information collected from the background screening will not be used for other purposes and shall be securely stored, and access available to only to those who have a need to know. After a period of seven years, Feather River Rail Society will initiate a new background check (rescreen) with all current Volunteers, and a new Disclosure and Authorization form will be required to be completed by the volunteer.

The cost of the background screen is \$19.00 per person. Feather River Rail Society requests that volunteer make a contribution towards the payment of the background check.

4. Checks to Be Conducted

Background Screener shall provide Feather River Rail Society the following reports pursuant to its “Advanced Criminal Package”. Included in the package is monthly monitoring and alerts for twelve months.

- I. **Social Security Trace (SS Trace)** - A Social Security Trace uses the volunteer-provided social security number to find all reported address information for an individual over the last seven years. The trace also finds all names used by the volunteer – the given name as well as any alias/maiden names used. The information returned from the trace is then used to determine the name/court of record combinations that will be searched. Using a Social Security Trace as part of the search package maximizes chances of finding all pertinent criminal history for an individual. The Social Security Trace shall not be used directly to disqualify applicants from volunteering with Feather River Rail Society. It is solely a resource to gather information.
- II. **County/State Residence Criminal Search (Current)** - The address entered during the background check order process is used to determine the county and state of residence (U.S.) for the volunteer. The search should look for any reported criminal history for the volunteer in that county or state at the primary source of information (the state or county courthouse).
- III. **County/State Search(es) – 7 Years of Address History** - All counties/states in which the volunteer has lived in the last 7 years should be identified. Those counties/states should be searched at the primary source of information (the state or county courthouse) using the name in question and other personally identifiable information
- IV. **Nationwide Criminal History Search with Validation** - A Nationwide Criminal History search uses the full name and date of birth provided by the volunteer during the order process to search over 900 criminal information data sources from all 50 states. The quality and breadth of data varies by state, and is limited for over 2/3 of the nation’s states (defined by limited data sources or stale information updated infrequently).
- V. **National 50 State Sex Offender Registry Search (Dru Sjodin/NSOPW)**
The National 50 State Sex Offender Registry Search / National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) is a comprehensive 50-state sex offender search
- VI. **Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) Watch List Search** - Also known as the Government Watch List Search, the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) search lists those individuals identified as threatening to or ineligible to conduct business with the U.S. Federal Government. It

includes Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) – those individuals and companies associated with specific countries the U.S. considers dangerous or does not want to have dealings with, and those known to be affiliated with terrorism or drug trafficking. It also includes Foreign Sanctions Evaders (FSEs) – individuals who have or have tried to violate U.S. sanctions on various countries. This list includes Iran, Syria, Cuba, Ukraine, and Russia.

5. Disqualification Criteria

The volunteer manager will review the report provided by the Background Screener and determine if any negative information has a direct connection with an applicant's ability to fulfill the volunteer's duties with competence and integrity, or that might impact safety.

Background check findings shall be reviewed in a fair, impartial and confidential manner. Because the Feather River Rail Society priority is the safety of the members, staff, volunteers and guests, certain convictions for certain crimes serve to automatically disqualify applicants for volunteer service at the Feather River Rail Society. For example any position that involves working with children will automatically disqualify a volunteer who is a convicted sex offender. A person will be ineligible for volunteer service if the person:

- Refuses to consent to a background screen.
- Makes a false statement in connection with a background screen.

Matters that might raise a concern include, but are not limited to, the following:

Criminal History Search – A criminal conviction will not automatically prohibit an individual from volunteering at Feather River Rail Society, but will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Convictions for the following categories of crimes will be reviewed against the role the volunteer is volunteering for and, if relevant, may be considered in making decisions:

- I. Any recent felony conviction – these serious crimes are usually defined by statutory guidelines, and in general, are punishable by more than 1-year incarceration.
- II. Theft – including burglary, embezzlement, forgery, fraud.
- III. Violent crimes – including murder, robbery, assault, battery.
- IV. Drug-related crimes – including use, sale, possession, distribution, or manufacture of illegal drugs.
- V. Sex offenses – including rape and sexual assault.

- VI. Serious motor vehicle offenses – includes driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Arrests that are not pending and did not result in conviction shall not be considered. Arrests pending disposition that are related to the role the volunteer is volunteering for may be considered.

Prior to making a decision regarding eligibility, the Feather River Rail Society will validate, using approved identification (e.g. Driver's license), that the background check was run using the same information.

If Feather River Rail Society uses the information reported from the background screens to deny volunteer's request to volunteer it shall provide the volunteer with notification before a final decision is made. Volunteer shall be given 5 days to appeal or dispute the notice. If the volunteer submits a reasonable appeal or dispute, then he or she may go forward with volunteer onboarding (e.g. a case of mistaken identity). However, if the volunteer's explanation is determined to be insufficient, then Feather River Rail Society shall deny the volunteer's request to volunteer.

Change Log:

Rev Number	Changes	By	Date
1	Initial Issue Format updates Legal Review	Kerry Cochran Paul Finnegan Porter/Simon	4/5/2018 4/6/2018 4/13/2018

Your Volunteers Want to Give Back — Let Them



Volunteer Self-Pay: How to Broach the Subject



Many organizations think volunteer screening is too expensive.

It's true – background checks can be a major line item for an organization that already has to stretch inadequate funding across many programs. But volunteer screening is necessary. If you are reading this, you likely know that.

So, what to do?



Here's an idea that you've likely considered but have decided against for one reason or another: have your volunteers pay for their own background checks. You might think that asking these individuals to actually pay to work for you for free will send them running. But you'd be surprised how many volunteers will elect to pay for all of part of their background checks when given the option.

In fact, in 2016, over 50% of the costs of background checks on the Verified Volunteers platform were paid for by volunteers.



Yes, it's true. Volunteers are working with your organization for a reason.

They want to help out just as much as you do. They are willing to do it for free. When all is said and done, many volunteers feel good about shelling out a little extra money if it means that they are helping a cause they truly care about. After all, 8 in 10 volunteers donate to charity according to the Corporation for National and Community Service.*

* www.nationalservice.gov

Still Feel Uncomfortable Asking Volunteers to Pay?

Here are some suggestions:

These are a few simple but effective tips to promote volunteer self-pay or donations towards volunteer background screening. Don't be nervous about asking for donations – the numbers show that a large percentage of volunteers have no issue contributing to the cost of their background check. You don't have much to lose; in fact, our data suggests organizations are forging stronger relationships with many of their volunteers in the process.

Suggestion 1: Make a connection.

Some volunteers serve to complete a requirement – whether a community service requirement or parental duty at a school. In this case, do they truly care about the work they are doing? Maybe not, but you can help them understand your organization, its goals, and its outcomes. Convince them that your cause is worthy of their time, attention, and perhaps a little of their money. Collect their contact information and utilize email campaigns to keep them up to date on your activities. Ask them to follow you on social media. Volunteers that care about your organization are more likely to cover the cost of their background checks. And organizations are telling us that those volunteers who cover the cost of their checks are more dedicated and stay with them longer.

Suggestion 2: Make it an option!

Consider your payment options. Instead of requiring volunteers to pay for the full cost of their background checks, you might think about requiring them to pay for just part of the cost of their check. Or don't require them to pay for anything at all, but give them the option to contribute.

In 2016, nearly 85% of organizations using the Verified Volunteers volunteer screening platform gave their volunteers the option to split the cost of their background checks with them. Almost 40% of those volunteers obliged, paying for all or part of their check. In fact, the volunteers covered, on average, 97.5% of the cost of their checks!

Suggestion 3: Be transparent.

Make sure your website and any communications you send to volunteers include language that appeals to your volunteers' sense of service and the cause they are serving. You are not out for your volunteers' money, but any contribution they can make would go a long way for your organization - to cover the cost of supplies, overhead, or whatever, and get you closer to achieving your mission. Be upfront and honest; they will appreciate it.

About Us

Verified Volunteers helps nonprofit organizations gain confidence in the volunteers working with those they serve by delivering thorough, compliant background checks. By enabling volunteers to order, manage and share their background checks via a secure online platform, we create a community of vetted volunteers and help nonprofit organizations save time and money. Our extensive expertise in screening and compliance best practices help clients recruit the best volunteers in order to maintain a safe environment and positive reputation. Verified Volunteers is backed by Sterling Talent Solutions, one of the world's largest background screening companies, and partnered with Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. **Visit www.verifiedvolunteers.com.**

To learn more, contact:

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Why Do I Need To Be Screened?

Do you not trust me?



We do. But as a volunteer, you need to be screened – for your safety and the safety of others.

You have decided to volunteer. That means that you are willing to spend your free time helping an organization you care about work toward a greater good. Unfortunately, not all volunteer applicants have pure intentions like yours; we frequently hear accounts of volunteers harming one another, staff members, or the people they seek to help. That's why, even though you mean no harm, you – and every other individual that wants to donate their time – must undergo a screening process. It's the only way to ensure your safety and the safety of everyone around you.

Just like some of you, volunteer programs have typically been resistant to screening in the past – after all, it is known for being costly, time-consuming and inconvenient. But screening is no longer a nice-to-have. More and more organizations are now conducting background checks on volunteers. According to The National Center for Victims of Crime survey¹, 72% of nonprofit organizations submit their volunteers to a background check. This is for good reason. 1 in 10 volunteer background checks come back with a previously undisclosed criminal history. Still, there are some volunteer programs that haven't started screening yet. Of those, 13 percent avoid the practice simply because it might offend volunteers.² We recommend these organizations consider the safety of their staff and participants, the protection of their assets, and the impact a volunteer scandal could have on their reputation.

Yes, anyone – not just vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, or the disabled – can be impacted by volunteers with less than noble intentions. That's why screening is the law in certain circumstances.

In the end, a good screening process shows that the organization you are working with cares about their program and the quality of individuals who help them.

And here's the good news for you: today, volunteer background checks can be completed faster than ever before – and for a fraction of the cost. After a simple order process, and within a few business days, you can receive your background check and be ready to start volunteering. Is the organization you are volunteering with using Verified Volunteers as their screening provider? Learn more about how easy it is to order your check – and how, with the Volunteer Fast-Pass, you can share your check with an unlimited number of organizations.

REFERENCES

- ¹ "Who's Lending a Hand?" A National Survey of Nonprofit Volunteer Screening Practices. Victims of Crime. Last modified 2008. www.victimsofcrime.org/docs/Public%20library/who's-lending-a-hand.pdf?sfvrsn=10
- ² Background Checks for Volunteers. National Association of Professional Background Screeners, 2012. www.americanchecked.com/wp-content/uploads/forms/Volunteer-Position-Paper.php



The Verified Volunteers Difference

It's Easy

Our online volunteer community works just like the social networks you are used to. Simply register and create a profile — just fill in your information and describe your interests. Our network is 100% secure and private. There are no confusing privacy settings here.

It's Fast

Once you join, you can search for volunteer organizations and browse new volunteer opportunities. It's best to search for organizations near you, or those that fit your personal mission and abilities. You can also request and pay for your background check with just a few clicks. You'll get your volunteer screening results in a couple of days!

You're in Control

You own your background check. You can view it at any time, and can sign up for the Volunteer Fast-Pass to reuse it with an unlimited number of organizations.

About Us

Verified Volunteers helps nonprofit organizations gain confidence in the volunteers working with those they serve by delivering thorough, compliant background checks. By enabling volunteers to order, manage and share their background checks via a secure online platform, we create a community of vetted volunteers and help nonprofit organizations save time and money. Our extensive expertise in screening and compliance best practices help clients recruit the best volunteers in order to maintain a safe environment and positive reputation. Verified Volunteers is backed by Sterling Talent Solutions, one of the world's largest background screening companies, and partnered with Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service.

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Your Fast-Pass to Volunteering.



If you're like over half the volunteers in America, you give your time to more than one organization. Whether it is coaching a child's sports team, volunteering with the Girl Scouts, or delivering Meals on Wheels, it seems like there's no limit to the need for your time and energy within the community.

Beyond scheduling and time constraints, one of the biggest volunteer complaints is the need for background screening. It feels intrusive, it requires you to give up your sensitive personal details and it can delay your volunteering. And when you have to do it every time you join a new organization, it can be repetitive and annoying.

Verified Volunteers is dedicated to fixing these problems. We make it secure, easy, and hassle-free to volunteer – with one organization or many.

It's fast, easy, and completely online

- + With Verified Volunteers, there is no need to fill out loads of paperwork. You are just four quick steps – and less than five minutes – away from ordering your background check.
- + Once you've placed an order, you are a Verified Volunteer. Log in to your account at any time, from anywhere, for any purpose – whether you need to update your request with missing information or are just curious about the status of your background check.
- + Your background check is completed in hours or days, not weeks or months. You are ready to begin serving faster than ever before.
- + And it's secure. Verified Volunteers follows best practices in data security. All your personal information is kept private - and safe.

It makes volunteering with multiple organizations a breeze

- + With the Volunteer Fast-Pass, get screened once and share with as many organizations on the Verified Volunteers platform as you'd like. You can eliminate the need to endure the screening process over and over again – and accelerate your onboarding process at new volunteer programs.
- + Sharing is a no-brainer. Simply create a profile, search for and view organizations, and choose those that interest you.
- + As a member, you'll be able to access all the information you need at the click of a button – where you have shared, your current status and more.

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Visit www.verifiedvolunteers.com.



Verified Volunteers is the first screening tool custom designed for the service sector. It's like a 'fast-pass' for volunteering – streamlining the process so volunteers can spend less time waiting and more time serving.”

Tracy Hoover, CEO, Points of Light

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