



# Volunteer Screening *Policy Development Tool*

## **About this document:**

- This document was created by the Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington as a step-by-step guide to the development of a policy and procedure surrounding volunteer screening.
- In Step #1, you will think about why your organization should screen prospective volunteers and you will then be able to use this information to develop a policy statement.
- In Step #2 and beyond, you will answer questions about the logistics related to volunteer screening.
- By completing these steps, you will have made all the decisions relevant to volunteer screening and will be able to use the resulting information to develop a screening policy and procedure for your organization.
- A policy template is included at the end of this document. You may choose to use this as a starting point and input all of the decisions you have made by using this tool into that document.

## Step #1: Generating a Policy Statement

What are the mandated requirements applicable to your organization that pertain to screening?

What do your organization's values and principles indicate you should be doing with respect to screening?

Use your answers to the above questions to create a policy statement. This statement should:

- Answer the question "why do we screen prospective volunteers?"
- Briefly outline how the various volunteers in your organization will be screened
- Be clear and concise (3-4 sentences)

### **Sample Policy Statement**

*"All Trellis volunteers that will be providing direct service to clients will undergo a consistent screening process that will assist in ensuring the suitability of the candidate, will assist in the matching process and will ensure that the safety of vulnerable clients will not be jeopardized in any way. Volunteers providing indirect support to our agency programs will be screened according to the type of position and whether or not they will have access to vulnerable clients and/or information regarding vulnerable clients." (Provided by Trellis Mental Health and Developmental Services)*

## Step #2: Generating Screening Procedures

### Before you begin:

- The following steps will help you to develop procedures in accordance with the policy statement you have just developed.
- Please note that this tool is intended to be used in conjunction with the job descriptions you have developed for the volunteer positions at your organization.
- This tool will guide you through developing procedures for one volunteer position and you can repeat these steps for the other positions as well.
- Let's select one volunteer position to work on in this sample.

**Brainstorm answers to the following questions in the box below. In the second box, list all final answers to the questions.**

- What expectations do we have for our volunteers?
- What would an ideal candidate look like?
- What is the standard that volunteers must meet throughout the screening process?

*Discussion Points:*

*Decisions that can be included in policy:*

### Step #3

Using your volunteer position description, circle the appropriate risk levels on the chart below:

	No Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Participant	Volunteer is in a role that does not involve interaction with participants	Adults	Adolescents and Seniors	Babies and children, persons with disabilities, infirm seniors
Setting	Volunteer works in isolation with no interaction with participants	Public space with high visibility and supervision <i>Example: Classroom with windows, meeting room/hall</i>	Space with limited visibility and supervision <i>Example: Tents or cabins, classroom with no windows</i>	Space with no visibility or supervision <i>Example: Car, private home of participant or volunteer</i>
Supervision	Supervisor present at all times	Supervisor regularly present	Infrequent supervision	Little to no supervision
Nature of relationship with participant	No contact with participants <i>Example: Administrative support, Transportation of clothing donations</i>	Short term, non-intimate <i>Example: Receptionist, Special event volunteer</i>	Personal relationship that extends over time <i>Example: Teaching assistant, Daycare helper</i>	One-on-one relationship, position of trust <i>Example: Coach, one-on-one support worker, overnight camp counselor</i>
Degree of Physical Contact	No physical contact with participants	Infrequent physical contact <i>Example: Coach positioning players on a field</i>	Regular physical contact <i>Example: Childcare provider hugging and lifting children</i>	Consistent intimate physical <i>Example: Changing, bathing, toileting, rehabilitating</i>
Access to Information	No access to money or confidential information	Rare/infrequent access to money and confidential information	Access to limited confidential information, handles money	Manages organization's funds, has access to master keys and passwords, has access to confidential and sensitive information

## Step #4

Using the answers you circled on the previous page, check off the risk associated with this volunteer position for each category:

	No Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Participant				
Setting				
Supervision				
Nature of Relationship				
Degree of Physical Contact				
Access to Information				

Based on your answers above, circle the appropriate overall risk associated with this volunteer position.

**Overall risk assessment:**      *No Risk*      *Low Risk*      *Medium Risk*      *High Risk*

## Step #5

Considering the risk assessment you have given this volunteer position, read the information below on the appropriate use of screening tools:

### General Screening Tools:

<b>Application</b>	Applications are appropriate for all volunteer positions.
<b>Interview</b>	Interviews are appropriate for all positions, however they may not be practical for no or low risk episodic volunteer positions.
<b>Reference Check</b>	Reference checks can be used for all positions, but may not be necessary for certain tasks with no previous experience or skill-set required and no associated risk. You should also request more than one reference for medium or high risk positions.
<b>Police Records Check</b>	Police Records Checks are suitable for positions that involve working with individuals who are at a greater risk of being harmed than the general public and where the volunteer is in a position of trust or authority.
<b>Rating Tool</b>	Rating tools can be used in conjunction with applications, interviews, and reference checks. This will help you to standardize your review process and allow you the opportunity to document your assessment of a candidate.

### Screening Tools for Special Circumstances:

<b>Driver Record Check</b>	Driver Record Checks are acceptable for positions involving use of an organization's vehicle or transportation of participants.
<b>Performance Assessment</b>	Performance Assessments are suitable for positions involving a high degree of physical exertion or a high necessity for specific skills and knowledge (ex. First Responder)
<b>Home Visit</b>	Home Visits are suitable for high-risk positions where it is anticipated that the participant will be engaged in activities at the volunteer's home.
<b>Medical Test</b>	Medical Tests are suitable for positions where such tests are mandated by the government (ex. TB tests for daycare centres) or where a high degree of physical exertion is required (ex. Volunteer Firefighter)

## Step #6

Using the information on page 4, check of the tools that you will use for this volunteer position:

- Application
- Application rating tool
- Interview
- Interview rating tool
- Reference check (one)
- Reference check (multiple)
- Reference check rating tool
- Police records check
- Driving record check
- Performance assessment
- Home visit
- Medical test

**Add these actions to the chart in Step #9.**

## Step #7

- For each of the tools listed below that you have decided to use in the previous step, indicate whether you will accept documents that pre-date the volunteer's application
- If you select "yes" for any of the tools, include the acceptable time interval in the final column

	No	Yes	Time Interval
Police Records Check			
Driver Record Check			
Medical Tests ( <i>please list</i> )			

**Step #8**

It is recommended that you create a personnel file for each volunteer where you can store the information that you collect during the screening process (application, interview record, etc.).

Answer the following questions in the space provided:

<b>How and where will we store volunteer personnel files?</b>	
<b>Will we store Police Records Checks, Medical Test Records, etc. on-site?</b>	<i>If yes, how will we store them to protect the volunteer's privacy?</i>
	<i>If no, how will we verify that we have seen these documents and that they are satisfactory?</i>
<b>Who will be permitted to access to this information?</b>	
<b>How long will we retain these records?</b>	

**Add any actions to the chart in Step #9.**



### Step #9

Using the table below:

- List all of the screening tools and measures for record retention you will be using for this position in the “Action” column
- Decide who within your organization will be responsible for each action
- Decide if you will require the action to be repeated for long-term volunteers as part of on-going screening (common actions that may be repeated include police records checks, medical tests, performance assessments, etc.). If so, list the date upon which the action will be updated.

Action	Person Responsible	Date of Re-Evaluation

**Congratulations! After completing these steps for all volunteer positions in your organization, you will then be able to use this information to develop policies and procedures for your organization pertaining to volunteer screening.**  
You may use the attached template on the following page as a starting point.

Name of Organization

## SCREENING OF AGENCY VOLUNTEERS

Subject:		Number:	
Effective Date:	Page No:		Section:
Revision Date	Approved by :		
Policy Statement:			
Procedures:			
<i>Here list all of the decisions you have regarding which screening tools will be used for which volunteer positions, who will be in charge of which tasks, what will be considered a satisfactory result, etc.</i>			
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			