



BACKGROUND SCREENING POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this policy is to preserve the safety and well-being of all persons who choose to participate in programs offered by the City of Bell Community Services Department. This policy shall outline procedures for conducting criminal background checks on specific volunteers, as defined by this policy, who may have unsupervised contact with youth under the age of 18 involved in a program offered by the City of Bell's Community Services Department.

BACKGROUND CHECK COMPANY SELECTION

The Community Services Department has selected Southeastern Security Consultants, Inc. (SSCI) to conduct background checks on all volunteers required to go through the background screening process. SSCI is a corporation specializing in conducting criminal background checks for volunteers in full compliance of the parks and recreation industry standards and expectations.

BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENT

All individuals who wish to serve as a volunteer and who are at least 18 years of age or older will be subject to a criminal background check. Minors, individuals under the age of 18, who wish to serve as a volunteer will not be subject to a criminal background check. A 30-day grace period shall apply from the date of the 18th birthday in order to allow time for the background screening to be processed. Upon the conclusion of the 30-day grace period, the individual may not participate unless the background screening requirement is met.

Within the sports division of the Community Services Department, the following volunteer positions shall be subject to a criminal background check: **Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Team Moms/Dads.**

BACKGROUND SCREENING PROCESS

1. Every individual who is required to complete the background screening process must first contact the Community Services Department staff and notify them of their interest in becoming a volunteer coach.
2. The individual will then have to complete, sign, and date a Volunteer Background Release form provided by the Bell Community Services Department.
3. The individual will then be directed to log on to the SSCI website and register for their background screening and then the Bell Community Services Department will request that SSCI perform the background check for the individual submitting the form.
4. SSCI will then conduct the screening that will entail the following:
 - **Social Security Verification**
Social Security Verification verifies the applicant's name and date-of-birth against the social security number provided. This is utilized to help eliminate the possibility of false names and/or information.
 - **Address Trace**
Address Trace verifies the applicant's current address and identifies previous addresses. This critical information is then utilized to determine the jurisdiction in which the background screening will be conducted.

- **Sex Offender Registry**
A national search of all 50 state repositories and the District of Columbia for known sex offenders.
 - **National Criminal Record Search**
The national database search provides access through the National Background Directory™ to criminal data from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) history. (Over 800 million criminal records.)
 - **Local Criminal Record Search**
State and county criminal record searches are performed to capture all misdemeanor and felony records. This is based on address history and multiple county searches may be performed. All county record searches are conducted on site in the appropriate courthouse.
5. Results will be available within 2-5 business days. SSCI will cross-reference the screening results with the 'Criteria for Exclusion' listed in this policy and assign a pass/fail grade for each individual. The pass/fail grade will then be communicated to the Community Services Department by SSCI as soon as the results become available. A pass grade for any volunteer that has zero disqualifying crime matches, a fail grade for any volunteer that has one or more disqualifying crime matches.
 6. All information pertaining to the background check will remain with SSCI, subject to applicable laws subject to disclosure. The Community Services Department will not be informed of the specific results of any background check; rather, the Community Services Department will only be issued a pass/fail grade for each volunteer.
 8. In the event of a fail/disqualification, the individual shall not be eligible to volunteer in any role with the Bell Community Services Department. **The prospective volunteer will be notified immediately of such by telephone or by written notice (certified mail) by the Sports Recreation Coordinator.** The prospective volunteer may contact SSCI and request to receive a copy of the background check report, a copy of the "Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)" and information on how to dispute the results of the profile if he or she so chooses.
 9. If the volunteer should choose to appeal the contents of the report, the individual is responsible for taking appropriate action with SSCI to have the results of the criminal background check report corrected if they believe information was reported in error. The volunteer is responsible for providing any and all documentation to support his or her claim.

Any person who willfully fails to comply with the background screening process or procedures shall be automatically disqualified. The City of Bell will not allow an individual to volunteer who refuses to consent to the background screening policy and procedures.

PROPER DOCUMENTATION

The background check records on all individuals who both pass and fail the screening procedures will remain with SSCI. No records will be kept by the Community Services Department other than the volunteer's name and the date of a pass or fail.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In respect of the individual and their privacy, all personal information is closely protected, not disclosed outside of the City of Bell, shared within the City of Bell only on a need to know basis, and used solely for the purpose of conducting the background check. In special circumstances, the City of Bell acknowledges a duty to disclose to third parties, including government agencies, certain types of information when the law requires that the information be disclosed.

The **Sports Recreation Coordinator** will administer the process of background checks. He/she will be responsible for providing the Volunteer Background Release forms, submitting the received Volunteer Background Release forms to SSCI, and informing volunteers of a pass or fail. All information received as a result of the screening will be kept confidential.

FREQUENCY

Individuals who wish to volunteer for the Community Services Department in a repeated manner will be screened every three (3) years. All “pass” background checks will expire two (3) years from the date of the “pass” report.

Individuals who receive a failing grade and are deemed as disqualified shall not be able to reapply as a volunteer and go through the background screening process again for three (3) calendar years from the date of their last failing report.

PENDING CASES

Should the background check indicate that an individual has criminal charges pending that fit the description of charges in the Criteria for Exclusion; the individual will be disqualified until there is a resolution of the charges.

Should an approved individual subsequently have any criminal charges brought against him/her that are listed in our Criteria for Exclusion during their term of service to the Community Services Department, they will be required to immediately disclose the nature of the charges to the **Sports Recreation Coordinator and/or Recreation Supervisor** and voluntarily terminate their duties until a determination is made by the **Sports Recreation Coordinator and/or Recreation Supervisor** regarding the effect of the pending charges on the individual’s functions within the program.

CRITERIA FOR EXCLUSION

A person who wishes to volunteer for the Community Services Department may be disqualified and prohibited from doing so if they have been found guilty of any of the following crimes:

For purposes of this policy; Guilty shall mean that a person was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea accompanied by a court finding of guilt (regardless of adjudication), or received court directed programs in lieu of conviction.

SEX OFFENSES

ALL SEX OFFENSES

- **Any sex offense regardless of the amount of time since said offense.**
- **Persons convicted of sex offences will be disqualified from volunteering in the Community Services Department.**

Examples include, but are not limited to: child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, etc.

FELONIES

MOST FELONY VIOLENCE OFFENSES

- **Persons convicted of a crime of violence or other serious crime against a person within the prior 20 years will be disqualified from any volunteer position.**

Examples include, but are not limited to: murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated burglary, etc.

ALL FELONY OFFENSES OTHER THAN VIOLENCE OR SEX

- **Persons convicted of a theft related crime or fraud within the prior 15 years will be disqualified from any position involving the handling of funds, property or personal identification information.**

Examples include, but are not limited to: drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment, etc.

MISDEMEANORS

ALL MISDEMEANOR VIOLENCE OFFENSES

- All Persons convicted of less serious crimes of violence, substance abuse or one of the listed miscellaneous crimes within the past 5 years will be disqualified from any coaching position or any position that leads children's activities..

Examples include, but are not limited to: simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit and run, etc.

MISDEMEANOR ALCOHOL OFFENSES

- DUI: Persons convicted of driving while under the influence or other traffic/conduct related crimes within the preceding 3 years will be disqualified from holding the position of team coach or assistant coach. Persons convicted of driving under the influence within the preceding 3 years may be accepted for other volunteer positions with the understanding that they are prohibited from driving any child or City of Bell volunteer other than immediate family members to or from any Community Services activity.

Examples include, but are not limited to: driving under the influence, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, etc.

MISDEMEANOR DRUG OFFENSES

- Persons convicted of a serious substance abuse crime within the past 10 years will be disqualified from any coaching position, referee assignment or any position that leads children's activities.

Examples include, but are not limited to: simple drug possession, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.

ANY OTHER MISDEMEANORS

- All other misdemeanor offenses within the past five (5) years that would be considered a danger to children or is directly related to the functions of that volunteer.

Examples include, but are not limited to: contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, etc.

PENDING CASES

It is recommended that anyone who has been charged for any of the disqualifying offenses listed above or for cases pending in court should not be permitted to volunteer until the official adjudication of the case.

Any individual on probation or required to complete a court ordered rehabilitation or other such program following a conviction for a crime appearing on the Table of Convictions will not be considered to serve as a volunteer until all terms and conditions established by the court have been satisfied and proof of completion submitted to the Community Services Department.

WHY THESE CRIMES?

The National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) has reviewed the resources of the National Association of Professional Background Screeners and sought the counsel of recognized background screening experts to develop a set of Recommended Guidelines for Volunteer Background Screening in park and recreation settings. These guidelines were produced as a result of this review.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- ❑ The Community Services Department will provide the Background Screening Policy and Volunteer Background Release form to each prospective volunteer.
- ❑ Volunteer retains Background Screening Policy for his or her records and completes, signs, dates and returns Volunteer Background Release to the Community Services Department.
- ❑ Community Services Department sends the Volunteer Background Release form to SSCI to perform the background check.
- ❑ SSCI conducts background screening and provides the results along with a pass/fail grade to the Community Services Department.
- ❑ In the instance of a fail, the Community Services Department notifies the prospective volunteer of the disqualification.