

## New PA Volunteer Clearance Requirements

**New clearance requirements for adult volunteers responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children.** The new clearance requirements go into effect July 1, 2015. From [House Bill 435](#), amending [Title 23 \(Domestic Relations\)](#) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, signed by Governor Tom Corbett on October 22, 2014.

The Department of Human Services (formerly DPW) will be creating a special web page for volunteers who meet the new clearance requirements. The new online clearance tools are scheduled to be available starting July 1, 2015.

For questions related to the new clearance requirements for volunteers or the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, please contact the ChildLine Verification Unit at 717-783-6211 or 1-877-371-5422.

### **New clearance requirements if the volunteer has been a resident of PA continuously for the past 10 years:**

- 1) Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check (\$10)
  - Scheduled to be added to epatch online system by July 1, 2015
- 2) ChildLine (Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance through the Department of Human Services) (\$10)
  - Scheduled to go online by July 1, 2015
- 3) Signed disclaimer affirming no charges in other states that would prohibit selection as a volunteer

### **New clearance requirements if the volunteer has NOT been a resident of PA continuously for the past 10 years:**

- 1) Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check (\$10)
  - Scheduled to be added to epatch online system by July 1, 2015
- 2) ChildLine (Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance through the Department of Human Services) (\$10)
  - Scheduled to go online by July 1, 2015
- 3) FBI Criminal Background Check (fingerprint check) for federal criminal history records (Tentative \$27.50 – it is anticipated that the fee for volunteers will likely be consistent with current DPW fees)
  - Scheduled to be added to Cogent online registration/processing system by July 1, 2015

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **When do my volunteers have to start applying for the required clearances?** As of July 1, 2015, volunteers responsible for the welfare of children or having direct contact with children shall be required to apply for and obtain the required certifications.
- **How often do clearances need to be renewed?** Clearances need to be renewed every 36 months.
- **Can my volunteer start before the clearance reports are received?** Employers, administrators, supervisors or other persons responsible for selection of volunteers may allow a volunteer to serve on a provisional basis for a single period not to exceed 30 days if the volunteer has applied for their clearances but has not yet received the results.
- **Can we require additional clearances for applicable volunteers?** Nothing interferes with the ability of an employer, or administrator of a program, activity or service to make employment, discipline or termination decisions or establishing additional clearance standards
- **If clearances obtained after July 1, 2015, do volunteers need to reapply for clearances within the 36-month period if they start volunteering for another organization or agency?** New clearances are not needed for volunteers during the length of time their certification is current.

- **What happens if we don't require clearances for applicable volunteers?** An employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for selection of volunteers that intentionally fails to require the submissions before hiring that individual commits a misdemeanor of the third degree.
- **What if a volunteer has had a new arrest, conviction or substantiated child abuse since their last clearance?** If an applicable volunteer is arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity or service, or is named as perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, the volunteer shall provide the administrator or designee with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that the person has been listed as a perpetrator in the Statewide database.
- **What does the organization do if a volunteer has notified the administrator of an arrest or conviction?** Employers, administrators, supervisors or other persons responsible for selection of volunteers shall immediately require and pay for the volunteer to submit the required clearances.
- **What if a person responsible for administration of a program, activity or service has a reasonable belief that a volunteer was arrested or convicted of an offense that would deny participation in a program, activity or service or was named as a perpetrator in an indicated or founded report?** Employers, administrators, supervisors or other persons responsible for selection of volunteers shall immediately require and pay for the volunteer to submit the required clearances.
- **What happens if the required clearance information is not disclosed by the volunteer?** A volunteer who willfully fails to disclose the required information commits a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination or denial of the volunteer position.
- **When are prospective volunteers ineligible for service?** Grounds for denying employment or participation in program, activity or service are the same prohibitive approval criteria as for employees. If the information obtained reveals that the applicant is disqualified from employment or approval the applicant shall be immediately dismissed from employment or approval.
- **Who do I contact for questions about the new clearance requirements?** For questions related to the new clearance requirements for volunteers or the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, please contact the ChildLine Verification Unit at 717-783-6211 or 1-877-371-5422.