

HAMILTON COUNTY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Rationale

One principle of positive youth development is based on the benefit of a positive, sustained relationship of the young person with a caring adult. Youth gain the confidence, connections, and caring they need to achieve their potential. HCAA depends on volunteers to help fulfill the role of a caring adult.

As the area's youth sports provider, HCAA must lead by conducting the most effective strategies and practices in volunteer screening and selection. All youth deserve a safe and caring environment, and all parents and guardians should expect that when their children are entrusted to the HCAA program, each child will be in a safe setting with caring adults.

HCAA continues to grow and improve. Strengthening its policy for volunteer registration fulfills an obligation to children, parents, volunteers, and employees. Providing greater security for all people involved in HCAA is the right thing to do. It is also important that we protect the image and integrity of HCAA.

Who Must Complete the HCAA Screening Process?

HCAA volunteer screening must be completed by:

- any individual wishing to hold an administrative level position within the organization
- any individual wishing to coach, be it a head coach or an assistant
- any individual wishing to be involved with any organization funds, such as concession workers

Volunteers who do not fit into one of the above criteria would be considered *episodic* and do not need to complete the screening.

Initial Screening

All volunteers who serve in roles requiring screening must complete the process and be appointed by the HCAA Board of Directors. This includes new and continuing volunteers who have not been screened and appointed previously. Volunteers in roles that require screening must complete the process before beginning their duties.

Volunteer Screening Process

Overview

- complete the initial application
- complete and return the background check authorization form
- background check
 - – National Criminal Background Check
 - – Illinois DCFS State Central Register / Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS)
- data file review and decision by Board of Directors

Data File Review

Once the background check has been completed, the Board of Directors will then consider the applicant files. The board will then determine if the application is approved or denied.

The files and the information they contain are confidential. See the **Confidentiality** section on page 2 of this handbook.

File Retention

Volunteer application files will be kept for two years after receiving the application or two years after the end of the individual's involvement, whichever is longest. At that time records will be shredded. Social security numbers will be erased from all files kept in HCAA possession.

Any volunteer who is disciplined or terminated due to allegations of any type of abuse upon a child will be retained indefinitely. If the child decides to pursue an action after reaching the age of maturity, the records may be needed in defending the action.

Any records relating to an ongoing situation will be retained.

If an applicant is not approved by the Board of Directors, all information in the file will be retained for two years after the decision is made.

Renewal for Continuing Volunteers

HCAA requires volunteers to renew their commitments annually. This will be done by submitting a volunteer registration for requested position(s). Registered volunteers are to be rescreened every three years. No volunteer duties may be conducted without a valid screening on file.

Criminal Background Screening Checks

The Criminal Backgrounds Checks involve the following:

- Illinois DCFS State Central Register / Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS).
- National Criminal Background Check conducted by the selected commercial firm or local law enforcement agency.

'Red Flags' or Special Considerations

Information gathered during the screening process may warrant increased scrutiny. These could be considered "red flags".

Suggested "red flags" – which should strongly indicate an automatic disqualification – are:

1. Use of an illegal substance or controlled drug not used as prescribed by a doctor.
2. Conviction of any crime against another person – adult or child: murder, possession of illegal substance with intent to sell, manslaughter or bodily injury while driving intoxicated, sex offenses.
3. Conviction of child abuse or neglect, or a listing on the DCFS State Central Register/Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS)
4. Conviction of a specific vehicular crime that makes the individual ineligible for automobile insurance through common providers.
5. Information on the National Criminal Background Check or DCFS State Central Register/Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS)

The screening process may bring forward information that does not appear to be at the "red flag" level but might indicate that additional scrutiny is advisable. Further investigation is warranted. Examples of "yellow flags" could include a long-ago DUI, minor property crime, financial impropriety, or misdemeanor.

Confidentiality

Maintaining the confidentiality of all profiles and supporting documents is the cornerstone of keeping trust in our organization's volunteer base. Each applicant is entitled to privacy and to fair treatment under the law. It is the intent of this program to treat all applicants fairly and with respect.

1. All persons involved in the volunteer screening process and with access to personnel files will be informed of the importance of confidentiality. Each person should read this page and sign the Confidentiality Statement, agreeing to protect the privacy of individuals involved.
2. HCAA volunteer applications, notes of references and interviews and/or reference forms or letters must be kept in a confidential file that can be accessed only by the organization's Board of Directors.
3. All information about applicants and why they have been accepted or rejected as HCAA volunteers must be kept confidential. Only the Board of Directors is involved in discussing applicants. Discretion and privacy must be used in the review and discussion.
4. Volunteer application files are to be kept for two years after being received or two years after the end of the individual's involvement, whichever is longest. At that point records will be disposed of by shredding. If a volunteer is disciplined or terminated due to allegations of any type of abuse upon a child, records must be retained indefinitely. If the child decides to pursue an action after reaching the age of maturity, the records may be needed in defending the action. Retain all records relating to any ongoing situations. If the applicant was not approved by the board, retain all information in the file for two years. (See *File Retention* on page 1)
5. Volunteer application files are treated as confidential personnel files. Each applicant may have access to review the contents of his or her own personnel file, however reference information and interview notes are confidential and must be removed before allowing the applicant access to the file. The applicant may view the file in the office or obtain copies of the file contents by written request. (See **Open Records Act** information, #6 below.) The individual may neither remove contents nor take the original file from the office. Since volunteer application files are personnel files, only the Board of Directors may review a volunteer application file.