

City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department
Volunteer Background Screening Policy

For the safety and well being of each and every participant in the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department programs and events, it shall be the policy, to obtain and utilize criminal history record checks for the purpose of screening all prospective volunteers and instructors. This screening process will determine suitability for access to children, elderly and disabled persons.

All volunteers will be required to sign and fully complete a written application and waiver form allowing the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department to order an individual criminal history records check. All volunteers must be a legal resident of the United States. Any volunteer that fails to submit and fully complete the signed consent form shall forfeit their consideration for a position. All forms must be submitted by the deadline, which is no later than one (1) week prior to the beginning of the program/event unless otherwise noted. Each criminal history record check shall be valid from February 1 to January 31 annually. Screenings processed during the months of December and January proceeding the February 1 date will qualify for the upcoming period.

Process

An applicant must complete a Volunteer Application and submit to the facility manager or event coordinator for review. A signed Waiver Form must accompany the application.

The City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department has selected a fingerprint system provider, *Volunteer & Employee Criminal History System (VECHS)* to perform criminal history records check in accordance by regulations set forth by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to change providers of criminal history background checks at any time, without notice.

The background screening includes the following:

- Social Security Verification
- Fingerprinting Trace
- Criminal History Record Check

The Department will receive criminal history record information within an estimated 48 hours. The City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department then will determine whether the applicant is an eligible volunteer.

Should information be found that would prevent an applicant from accepted, the submitting staff person, or program coordinator, will issue letter to the applicant in a confidential manner.

The applicant is responsible for taking appropriate action to have the results of the criminal history record report corrected if they believe information was reported in error.

All screened volunteers and instructors must identify themselves, at all times, in the performance of their duties by wearing and displaying a Department issued Identification Badge. Failure to wear City issued Identification Badge will result in removal from program or event.

Detailed Infractions List

An individual applicant shall be disqualified from positions as a volunteer or instructor with the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department, if they have ever been found guilty or entered a plea of guilty, for any of the following:

- A. Any Felony involving violence**
- B. Any Felony involving a minor**
- C. Any Felony involving a sexual offense**

Should any pending charges described in “A”, “B”, or “C” be uncovered, or should any charges be brought against an Applicant while he/she is volunteering, the Applicant shall be suspended from serving as a volunteer until such time as the charges have been cleared or dropped and he/she is reinstated by the Parks and Recreation Department Director.

In addition, the Applicant shall be disqualified if he/she has been found guilty or entered a plea of guilty, for any of the following within the past **seven (7) years**:

- D. Any Misdemeanor involving violence**
- E. Any Misdemeanor involving a Minor**
- F. Any Misdemeanor involving a sexual offense**
- G. Any Felony not listed under “A”, “B”, or “C”**

In addition, the Applicant may be disqualified for a history of repetitive conduct or for other offenses by the Parks and Recreation Department Director based on evidence that such conduct or offense indicates it is inappropriate for Applicant to work with youth, elderly or disabled persons because Applicant may be harmful to youth, elderly or disabled persons

Individuals who have been found guilty or entered a plea of guilty for a sexual offense involving a child under the age of 13 will not be able to volunteer and will not be eligible to request an appeal.

Appealing Decisions

Any Applicant denied because of the results of a background screening may request in writing an appeal of the decision to the City Manager. The decision of the City Manager will be final.

In reviewing a decision the City Manager shall examine the following criteria:

1. Errors that may have been made on the criminal history report.
2. Length of time since offense/conviction.
3. Whether applicant was under the age of 18 when the offense/conviction occurred.
4. Other evidence that indicates the Applicant is qualified to work with youth, elderly and disabled persons.

ADOPTED November 1, 2006 and amended on January 6, 2010 and September 21, 2010.