



## County Extension and Outreach Staff and Volunteer Background Screening

The purpose of a county employee and volunteer background screening process is to create and maintain the best possible environment for clients and program participants of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This is one step in selecting and placing qualified employees and volunteers in appropriate positions. The background check provider is First Advantage Background Screening (FABS).

### County Extension Staff

- The hiring process is complete after the approved candidate receives a favorable FABS report. This report includes: social security number verification, motor vehicle records, national criminal records, state and federal sex offender registries
- All approved volunteers and staff are to be rescreened every three years.

### Extension Authorized Volunteers

An authorized volunteer is an individual who performs services in furtherance of the humanitarian, educational, or service mission of Iowa State Extension and Outreach. The County Extension Council must approve and authorize all volunteers before they begin serving as a volunteer. All approved volunteers must successfully pass a background check, have received training for the responsibilities required of the volunteer position and have demonstrated the abilities necessary to successfully meet the duties of the volunteer position. By doing so, approved volunteers will be covered by the county's liability insurance coverage through LMC Insurance and Risk Management and American Income Life.

An authorized volunteer performs services without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation, benefits or consideration for the services provided. Although compensation for authorized volunteer services is not allowed, county authorized volunteers who have received prior council approval may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses following county fiscal policy reimbursement guidelines.

### **What is a Vulnerable Person?**

1. A person under 18 years of age.
2. An adult whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living or to provide for his or her own care or protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation or improper sexual contact is impaired on a short term or long term basis due to a mental, emotional, physical or developmental disability or dysfunction, brain damage, or the infirmities of aging.
3. Or a person who is in circumstances such as socioeconomic status but not limited to that place that person at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or improper sexual contact.

## **Frequency of Screening Volunteers and Employees**

All authorized volunteers are to be screened regardless of duration and frequency of times that they volunteer for any extension programs.

- All new volunteers including Master Gardener Program applicants, regardless of program area or level of risk, are initially background screened.
- All authorized volunteers and employees are to be rescreened every three years.

## **Background Results - Decision making both for staff and volunteers**

The process for decision making adopts the standards, procedures and business protocol of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). The FCRA basically requires:

- Disclosure to individuals that a consumer report may be obtained from a consumer reporting agency.
- Obtaining written authorization from all individuals who will have their background checked
- Certify to the consumer reporting agency that you took the steps and obtained a report for a permissible purpose (employment and volunteer screening is a permissible purpose).
- Have FABS send a "pre-adverse action" notice to consumers before any adverse action is taken based at least in part on the information obtained. That notice should contain a copy of the report you received from the consumer reporting agency or information about how to obtain that information. At the same time you should provide a summary of rights under the FCRA to the individual.
- Provide the individual an opportunity to challenge the information contained in the background screening report.
- Once an adverse decision is made, an "adverse action notice" is sent by FABS to the individual to inform them that information from the background screening process impacted your decision to either not hire an staff or not accept a volunteer

To comply with these standards the following will be procedures for data input and report actions.

- Complete the correct Authorization and Disclosure forms (employee or volunteer).
- Data inputted into FABS.
- Report is received by county designee.
- County contact will meet with individual at their request, and upon completion of the questions, share the pre-adverse process, provide the summary of the rights under FCRA, and upon completion of the questions, will recommend action to the council.

If an adverse decision is made, an adverse action notice must be sent by FABS to the individual informing him/her that information from the background screening process impacted the decision to either not hire as staff or approve as a volunteer.

## **Record Keeping**

The signed and dated Volunteer and Employee Background Screening Authorization and Disclosure forms are to be kept for 7 years or until the volunteer's service has ended.