Background Screening for Volunteers

Kerry Cochran General Superintendent
10/2/2018 – updated 3/11/19

Background screening or getting a background check, I'm sure you have heard these terms before. When you apply for a new job this is the now normal for any applicant when looking to be hired by most firms or companies, public or private.

The Feather River Rail Society is concerned about the safety of its volunteers, constituents (staff, community, etc.) and the protection of its assets and reputation. To address these concerns volunteers of Feather River Rail Society must undergo background screens, which shall comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act ("FCRA"), in order to volunteer with the Feather River Rail Society.

Why now? There have been questions asked about our society and the museum, along with our insurance company asking each year on the renewal of our insurance policy.

Earlier this year more questions were asked, so I contacted several other museum to see how they handle this subject. Each that I contacted told me basically the same thing, you better be doing it or you may end up with a problem on your hands.

With some of this information in hand, a new Feather River Rail Society Policy was created and sent to the FRRS Board of Directors for consideration. After the legal team reviewed and approved the policy, it was brought to the FRRS Board of Directors at the May 12th meeting and approved.

During the time the policy was being reviewed by legal, we had selected a background screening company and entered into discussions with them. Working with the legal team and the background company, we selected Verified Volunteers as the third party to conduct our background screening.

Verified Volunteers is an independent third party that conducts background screens ("Background Screener"). Information on Verified Volunteers can be found at: https://www.verifiedvolunteers.com/.

No background check will be run without your prior knowledge and consent. The personal data and information collected from the background screening will not be used for other purposes and shall be securely stored, and access is available only to the FRRS background administrator. Storage is held on a secure site of Verified Volunteers.

This Policy applies to all prospective and current volunteers, actively working at the museum, on any of the FRRS off-property events and every member who represents the FRRS.

Full details are detailed in the society policy PM0033 - Volunteer Background Screening available to all members. It can be viewed on the society's website:
https://www.wplives.org/museum_policies/PM0033_Volunteers_Background_Screening_Policy.pdf

An invitation will be sent to each volunteer that will need to have a background check performed and the volunteer will be able to give Verified Volunteers that information needed so that they may perform the check.

In this invitation you will see the following message:

<Your Name>

This is your invitation to provide the FRRS with your background check which is required to volunteer at the Feather River Rail Society and/or the Western Pacific Railroad museum. Please follow the Verified Volunteers

instructions to submit a background check, we are asking that each volunteer (donate) the $19.00 cost for the check. Should you have any questions, please contact me.

In some cases there will be Source or Repository fees that are mandated fees that are required by some states in order to pull a report from a jurisdiction/county. If the candidate has lived in one of these states, a source fee will be added to their background check order. (i.e.: Washoe County, Nv. an additional $7.00)

The FRRS Policy for background screening can be found by going to:
https://www.wplives.org/museum_policies/PM0033_Volunteers_Background_Screening_Policy.pdf

Thank you, Kerry Cochran
General Superintendent

The volunteer manager will review the report provided by the background screener and determine if any negative information has a direct connection with an applicant's ability to fulfill the volunteer's duties with competence and integrity, or that might impact safety.

Background check findings shall be reviewed in a fair, impartial and confidential manner. Because the Feather River Rail Society priority is the safety of the members, staff, volunteers and guests, certain convictions for certain crimes serve to automatically disqualify applicants for volunteer service at the Feather River Rail Society. For example any position that involves working with children will automatically disqualify a volunteer who is a convicted sex offender. A person will be ineligible for volunteer service if the person:

Refuses to consent to a background screen.
Makes a false statement in connection with a background screen.

Verified Volunteers will communicate with you during the background process and once you have created an account with them you will receive email updates.

Any questions or special considerations concerning this policy should be directed to the volunteer manager or the general superintendent.