



Youth Protection Standards

Rules, Guidelines and Procedure Handbook

2015-2016

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Youth Protection Standards
Rules and Guidelines**

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What's New/Important Reminders 2015-2016

All Youth Protection Standards Information and Forms are available at the following site:

Texas 4-H Web Site: http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/agent_resources

Training

Several trainings have been scheduled to review the volunteer screening process for both 4-H and non-4-H volunteers. New agents and support staff members are encouraged to participate. However, the trainings are open to anyone. All trainings will be conducted online via WebEx. Training dates are:

- Wednesday, September 2nd @ 2:00 pm
- Thursday, December 3rd @ 10:00 am
- Tuesday, May 10th @ 1:30 pm

4-H Volunteer Application Fee

4-H volunteers will be assessed a volunteer application fee in the amount of \$5. This fee is assessed annually when a 4-H volunteer creates or reactivates his/her profile in 4-H CONNECT (whether or not screening is needed).

Credit Card Payment Option Available for 4-H Volunteers

4-H volunteers have the opportunity to pay the annual volunteer application fee by credit card or check. Please note that counties can select the payment options available in 4-H CONNECT. Therefore, counties can choose *not* to offer volunteers the option to pay by credit card. If so, the County Extension Office will continue with the current process of submitting volunteers with a check payment for the annual \$5 volunteer application fee. Please note that the processing time for volunteer application fees paid by check is much greater than those paid by credit card.

Volunteer Cards

Any county needing volunteer cards for new volunteers may request them by contacting Courtney Dodd or Meridith Wilde at the State 4-H Office.

Final Approval of 4-H Volunteer Applications

Please note that screening of volunteers is conducted after the volunteer has submitted his/her application. The county Extension office gives final approval on volunteer applications. If paying by credit card, the card will be charged when the volunteer profile is approved at the county level. When paying by check, the county cannot approve the volunteer profile until the check payment has been received by the 4-H Foundation and payment has been indicated in 4-H CONNECT.

Re-activating 4-H CONNECT Profiles

When volunteers enroll for the new 4-H year, it is important they re-activate their profile on 4-H CONNECT and *not* create a new profile. If a new profile is created, the volunteer screening information will not transfer to the new profile. Therefore, the system will indicate the volunteer needs to be screened.

Extension Employee Profiles

The following applies to Extension employees - agents, specialists, associates, assistants, and district/state administrative assistants. It does *not* apply to county employees, such as program assistants and/or support staff.

Since Extension employees are screened through AgriLife Extension Human Resources, they do *not* have to be screened through YPS. When Extension employees create or re-activate a profile, there is an option on the personal information page to indicate whether or not one is an Extension employee. Selecting this option will bypass the employee around the screening and training requirements, as well as the volunteer application fee. Once an employee's profile is approved at the state level, it will then be ready for approval at the county level.

I. Screening Overview

A. Who is screened?

1. All direct volunteers who work with youth and adults should be screened through the Youth Protection Standards Program. See Attachment A.
2. Initial screening of a volunteer is conducted when he/she applies for a volunteer role with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Volunteers must be screened prior to fulfilling any volunteer roles.
3. Re-screening of all Extension volunteers is conducted every three years from the volunteer's most recent screening.

Note: 4-H Volunteers - The need for re-screening is determined on a 4-H year basis. For example, a volunteer screened any time prior to or during the 2012-2013 4-H year (between September 1, 2012 and August 31, 2013, also considered "4-H Year 2013") needs to be re-screened at the beginning of 4-H Year 2015 (9-1-15 thru 8-31-16).

B. Who is a direct volunteer?

1. A direct volunteer is any adult who meets the following criteria:
 - a. Provides unpaid support for Extension through face-to-face contact;
 - b. Provides a learning experience for adults or youth within Extension;
 - c. Has an individual volunteer application on file with the appropriate program area;
 - d. Has a position description on file; and
 - e. Has passed a criminal background check within the past three years.
2. Master volunteers are also considered to be direct volunteers.

C. Are overnight or driving chaperones screened?

Yes! Individuals who are driving youth or chaperoning youth for overnight events are considered direct volunteers and must be screened and cleared through the Youth Protection Standards Program prior to serving as a volunteer.

Examples: Texas 4-H Roundup Chaperone, a driver to Texas Teen Retreat, helping lead a workshop at Texas 4-H SpecTra, 4-H Club Manager, Livestock Mentor, 4-H project leader, Master Volunteer, or Shooting Sports Leader, etc.

D. What kind of criminal background check is conducted?

1. A national criminal background check is conducted through the Volunteer Center of North Texas. This is a nonprofit group designated through legislation that all state agencies with volunteers must use to conduct background searches.
2. The criminal background check consists of a Texas DPS records search, a national search of forty-eight (48) jurisdictions and state and national sex offender lists.

E. What information is required for screening?

1. Full, legal name (first, middle and last)
2. Address
3. Date of Birth (***Be sure to put the correct year!***)
4. Gender
5. Race/Ethnicity (Although optional, this helps affirm the volunteer's identity.)
6. First five digits of social security number
7. Driver's License number

Note:

- All information is a determining factor that helps confirm the volunteer's identity when a background check is completed.
- For all volunteer applications (whether a Master Volunteer paper application or online form), it is imperative that all requested information is provided to avoid any delays in the screening process.

F. When is screening conducted?

1. Initial screening of a volunteer is conducted when he/she applies for a volunteer role with Extension.

Note: Volunteers must be screened prior to fulfilling any volunteer roles.

2. Re-screening through the YPS program is conducted every three years from the volunteer's most recent screening.
3. No grand fathering of volunteers is allowed in the YPS program.
4. Volunteer applications are processed for screening on a bi-weekly basis in the Texas 4-H YPS Office.

G. Is screening conducted by other entities accepted by Extension?

1. Volunteers may document a prior criminal background check from another entity on the volunteer application or when enrolling in 4-H CONNECT.
2. Extension will only accept screenings performed by entities on the approved list. See Attachment B. The minimum requirement is a criminal background check conducted through DPS or a national criminal search entity.
3. Documentation of screening by other entities is required.

a. Documentation may include a letter of acceptance from the employer or volunteer group, a letter written from the screening entity to Extension stating the volunteer has been screened and passed, or a copy of the volunteer card or credentials.

Note: A volunteer will not be approved to serve as a volunteer until documentation of a previous screening by another entity has been provided, reviewed, and accepted by the Texas 4-H YPS Office.

- b. A copy of the letter stating the volunteer has been screened by another approved entity should be forwarded to the Texas 4-H YPS Office, with a copy also maintained in the county office. These files will be permanently maintained in the Texas 4-H YPS Office.
 - c. A volunteer who completes a volunteer application, or enrolls online, and submits a letter of screening from an approved entity and, therefore, does not need to be screened through YPS, does not need to submit \$10.
 - d. If a volunteer claims prior screening, but it is not from an approved entity, he/she must be screened through the Youth Protection Standards Program.
4. Although volunteers may have been screened and passed a criminal background check through an approved entity, it is Extension's policy that volunteers be screened every three years, no matter the entity.

Example: A volunteer who passed a criminal background check when he/she began volunteering with a church in 2009, but has not been re-screened since the initial screening, must be re-screened through the YPS Program.

H. How are volunteer applications processed?

1. Volunteer applications and information are reviewed and processed by two employees who oversee the YPS program and complete the data entry.
2. These individuals have been screened for security sensitive purposes and to handle confidential information.
3. Only individuals who have been trained and certified through the Volunteer Center of North Texas may review the criminal history results. Copies of the results cannot be shared with anyone including the volunteer being screened.
4. County Extension Agents are not informed of the details of the criminal history record. Information obtained through the volunteer application and screening is held in the highest confidence.
5. All forms are kept under double lock and key. All electronic files are password protected at multiple levels.

I. How are screening results reviewed?

1. Criminal records are reviewed for “red flags.” A red flag is a charge or conviction on a criminal history record.
2. All official criminal history records are shredded and not kept on file, unless the volunteer is pending due to a request for more information.

J. How is the status of volunteers determined?

1. A volunteer’s status is based on the charge or conviction, frequency of offense, and the amount of time passed since the occurrence of the offense.
2. All volunteer records are reviewed and handled on an individual basis.
3. Although criminal records are comprehensive over an individual’s lifetime, the YPS program focuses on the most recent ten (10) years of the summary. Convictions in the dismissed section below are the exception to the 10-year focus.
4. Volunteer applicants are identified with one of the following status categories:
 - a. Cleared: Approved to fulfill all duties of the volunteer role for which the volunteer is applying.
 - b. Restricted: Restrictions may be imposed based on the charges or conviction records.

Example: A conviction of numerous hot checks would result in a restriction of not handling or managing any group funds.

Example: A DWI conviction in the last ten years would result in a restriction of not driving youth other than the volunteer’s own legal children.
 - c. Pending: This determination is based on an incomplete criminal history report, no disposition of a case or a question related to a charge. Additional information may be requested from a volunteer. Any follow-up information is sent by the volunteer to the Texas 4-H YPS Office. Details regarding records are not shared with county or other program faculty.
 - d. Dismissed/Denied: A volunteer is dismissed/denied based on certain convictions of the Texas Penal Code. Automatic dismissals result from indecency with a child, injury to a child, sexual assault, murder or felony drug convictions. A volunteer may also be denied if he/she does not respond to requests for more information on a charge(s).

Examples: A conviction of embezzlement or mishandling Extension group funds would result in dismissal. A registered sex offender would result in a denial.

5. No person may serve with youth or children who has ever been convicted of any disqualifying offense, been on probation or received deferred adjudication for any disqualifying offense, or has presently pending any criminal charges of any disqualifying offense before a determination of guilt is made including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. Disqualifying offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against a person or family.
 - A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against public order or indecency.
 - A felony or misdemeanor violation of any law intended to control the possession or distribution of any substance included as a controlled substance in the Texas Controlled Substances Act.

K. What warrants a volunteer to be re-screened or his/her status reviewed?

1. The following conditions may warrant review of a volunteer's status or re-screening:
 - Questionable situation
 - A written complaint against a volunteer
 - Knowledge of a volunteer being charged or arrested
 - Knowledge of a volunteer making an improper advancement toward a youth
2. County Extension Agents should communicate with their respective District Extension Administrator immediately upon learning of an incident or questionable situation.
3. Copies of correspondence sent to the volunteer (i.e. dismissal letter) should be sent to the Texas 4-H YPS Office and the Texas 4-H Program Director so it may be filed with the volunteer's record.

L. Grievance Procedure

The following is the procedure if a volunteer chooses to dispute a decision made during the application process or at any time during the volunteer's appointment with Extension.

1. Volunteer submits concern in writing to the Texas 4-H YPS Office, with a copy to the District Extension Administrator and county Extension agent. Letters should be sent to the following address:

Courtney F. Dodd
YPS
4180 State Highway 6
College Station, TX 77845

2. The appeal is reviewed and the volunteer receives a written statement from the Texas 4-H YPS Office regarding the decision made within a reasonable amount of time.
3. This grievance procedure pertains only to decision(s) made by Extension personnel. If a concern is raised about the information obtained through a criminal background check, the volunteer should be given the following information.

If an applicant disputes information that is on the criminal history record transcript, he/she must follow the procedure to review personal criminal history record, which

includes getting fingerprints and sending the prints to DPS along with the appropriate form. If it is determined that the record is indeed the applicant's own record and the applicant feels that there is a mistake in the criminal record, a letter should be written specifying the area of concern. An investigation will be conducted to determine whether or not an error has been made. Any costs associated with the process will be the responsibility of the volunteer.

The letter should be addressed to: Texas Department of Public Safety
Error Resolution Department
P.O. Box 4143
Austin, TX 78765-4143
512/424-2151

II. 4-H Volunteer Screening Procedures

A. Volunteer Forms:

1. All 4-H volunteers must enroll online via 4-H CONNECT. If a volunteer does not have access to the internet, he/she may complete and submit a Texas 4-H Adult Volunteer Application (downloaded from the Texas 4-H website: texas4-h.tamu.edu/publications). The County Extension Office must then input the volunteer's information into 4-H CONNECT.
2. Since 4-H volunteer screening is processed through 4-H CONNECT, 4-H volunteer forms do NOT have to be sent in to process for screening. However, the invoice (printed from 4-H CONNECT) and the check payment must be sent in for screening to be processed.

B. Screening Cost and Payment Options:

1. Starting in the 2014-15 4-H year, 4-H volunteers will be assessed a volunteer application fee in the amount of \$5. This fee will be assessed annually when a 4-H volunteer creates or reactivates his/her profile in 4-H CONNECT. The application fee will cover the cost of volunteer screening (which is conducted every three years).
2. Payment of the 4-H volunteer application fee can be made by club/county check or credit card. A specific outline of the process is included in the volunteer enrollment instructions posted at: <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/connect-2>.
 - a. Credit Card Payments: Upon processing of the credit card payments by the state 4-H office, criminal background checks will be processed as needed.
 - b. Check Payments: If payment of the volunteer application fee is made by check, the County Extension Office will create an invoice, secure a check, and mail both invoice and check to the Texas 4-H Foundation. Once received, the invoice and check will be processed and credited against the 4-H volunteer's profile and criminal background check will then be processed as needed. ***Please note that the check payment process is much slower than payment made by credit card since screenings are not processed until the check payment is received.***
 - c. Checks should be made payable to Texas 4-H Foundation and sent in to the following address:
Texas 4-H Foundation
P.O. Box 11020
College Station, TX 77842
 - d. Check payments for volunteer application fees must be paid separately and not combined with youth enrollment or event registration fees.
 - e. Each county, club and/or association is responsible for determining how to cover the cost of volunteer application fees.

C. Creating an Invoice for Payments by Check

When paying the volunteer application fees by club/county check, a volunteer screening invoice generated from 4-H CONNECT **must** accompany the payment.

1. Log into 4-H CONNECT.
2. Click the [Finances] Tab.
3. Click the [Transfers] Tab.
4. Click the [Quick Add] link.
5. Scroll down to the Enrollment section to view all the adult enrollments that require a payment.

6. Click the orange [Create] button under the enrollment section.
7. Click on the box to the left of each adult to include on the transfer invoice.
8. Click either of the orange [Save] buttons.
9. Review the invoice and click [Submit]. This will lock the transfer for any future changes or adjustments.
10. Click the [Print Transfer] link. This will prompt you to save or open up depending on the settings on the computer.
11. Mail the transfer, along with the check payment, to the 4-H Foundation office. ***Please note:*** volunteer application fees paid by check will not become eligible for approval at the county level until the payment has been received and processed by the 4-H Foundation.

D. Follow Up to Screening

1. Volunteer Status

Upon completion of screening, a 4-H volunteer's status will be updated in 4-H CONNECT. The status will be designated as one of the following:

- Approved,
- Restricted from handling funds,
- Restricted from driving youth other than own children, or
- Denied.

2. Correspondence

- a. An e-mail is sent stating the volunteer profiles have been updated in 4-H CONNECT. The volunteer profiles are then ready for final approval at the county level (will be listed in the "Awaiting County Approval" list).
- b. If a volunteer is restricted or denied, a letter will be sent directly to them from the YPS office, with a copy of the letter e-mailed to the County Extension Agent, District 4-H Specialist and District Extension Administrator.

3. Volunteer Cards

Volunteer cards have been distributed to all County Extension Offices. As volunteers are screened and approved, counties should complete the volunteer card and distribute to the volunteers. Additional cards may be requested by contacting Courtney Dodd at the State 4-H Office.

F. Screening Summary Spreadsheets

1. County Extension Agents may generate a volunteer screening report from 4-H CONNECT. To access the report, follow the instructions below:
 - a. Logged in to your county profile, click on the "Reports" icon on your dashboard.
 - b. On the reports page, click on "Shared" to access shared reports created at the state level.
 - c. From the list of reports, click on "Volunteer Leader Screening Status" and then "Run Report."
 - d. This report will provide you with a list of all 4-H volunteers in your county that have a 4-H CONNECT profile and their screening status/last year approved through YPS.

III. Non-4-H Volunteer Screening Procedures

A. Volunteer Forms

1. All Master Volunteers and BLT Volunteers must complete and submit a Volunteer Background Check Form. It is imperative all information requested is provided to avoid any delays in the screening process.
2. EFNEP Volunteers should use the EFNEP Volunteer Registration Form (EFNEP-2816).

B. Screening Cost and Payment Information

1. The cost of screening is \$10 per volunteer.
2. One check per county submission is required from the appropriate volunteer group or association.
3. Checks should be made payable to **Extension Account #255003** and sent to the following address:
Texas 4-H Office
Youth Protection Standards
4180 State Highway 6
College Station, TX 77845
4. Each county, club and/or association is responsible for determining how to cover the cost associated with screening volunteers.
5. Screening of volunteers is not conducted until payment is received in the Texas 4-H YPS Office. Therefore, counties should plan to submit volunteers for screening **at least one month prior to fulfilling any volunteer duties.**

C. Process for Submitting Volunteer Applications

1. Volunteer applications are completed and submitted to the County Extension Office in which the volunteer resides.
2. The volunteer applications are then forwarded to the Texas 4-H YPS Office with a transmittal form and a check for \$10 per volunteer being screened. The transmittal form is included in Attachment C.
3. Counties are asked to send volunteer applications on a monthly basis and not hold volunteer applications for extended periods of time. Volunteer applications are processed for screening on a weekly basis.
4. Please note that screening will not be processed until payment is received.

C. Follow Up to Screening

1. Volunteer Status & Screening Summary Spreadsheets
 - a. A screening summary spreadsheet is maintained for each county volunteer group.
 - b. Upon completion of screening, counties will receive an updated screening summary spreadsheet via e-mail, with the names of volunteers screened and the volunteers' status (cleared, restricted, pending, dismissed).
 - Cleared (C)
 - Restricted Money (R-M)
 - Restricted Driving (R-D)
 - Pending (P)
 - Denied (D)
 - d. Counties should use the screening summary spreadsheet to determine volunteers that are due for another screening.

- e. Any time county faculty needs an updated copy of the screening summary spreadsheet, a request can be made with the Texas 4-H YPS Office (yps@ag.tamu.edu), and the spreadsheet will be sent to the county Extension agent via e-mail.
2. Correspondence
 - a. An e-mail is sent to the county stating volunteers have been processed, with the screening summary spreadsheet attached.
 - b. When a volunteer is pending, restricted or dismissed, letters are sent from the Texas 4-H YPS Office directly to the volunteer, with a copy of the letter e-mailed to the County Extension Agent, 4-H Specialist and District Extension Administrator.
 - c. A letter may be sent from the county Extension office to the volunteer notifying them of their “approved” screening status. See Attachment D for example.
3. Volunteer Cards

Volunteer cards have been distributed to all County Extension Offices. As volunteers are screened and approved, counties should complete the volunteer card and distribute to the volunteers. Additional cards may be requested by contacting Courtney Dodd at the State 4-H Office.

Youth Protection Standards Who should be screened?

Volunteer Type	Role of Volunteer	Screened?
Achievement Event Judge	Episodic	No
Activity Leader	Direct	Yes
Volunteer/Parent providing transportation to a 4-H event, coordinated by the County Extension Agent or club/group	Direct	Yes
Parent providing transportation for youth to a local 4-H event, NOT coordinated by the County Extension Agent or club/group	Not a volunteer role	No
Livestock Board Member/Committee Chair	Indirect	No
Validation Committee Member	Indirect	No
4-H Enrichment Curriculum Leader (teacher or volunteer)	Direct	Yes
Overnight chaperone	Direct	Yes
Master Volunteer	Direct	Yes
Livestock Mentor	Direct	Yes
4-H Club Manager/Assistant Club Manager	Direct	Yes
Volunteer/Parent who fills in for club manager on short notice	Direct	Yes
4-H Clover Kids Project Leader	Direct	Yes
Day Camp Volunteer	Direct	Yes
Treasurer/Signer on a 4-H affiliated account	Direct	Yes
Shooting Sports Coach	Direct	Yes
Project Leader	Direct	Yes
Judging Team Coach	Direct	Yes
Quiz Bowl Team Coach	Direct	Yes
Ag Day/Farm Safety Day Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Coordinator(s) • Group Leader • Resource Person/Speaker 	Direct Direct Episodic	Yes Yes No
Assistant at 4-H contest	Episodic	No
Donor	Indirect	No
LAB/Program Area Committee Member	Indirect/Direct	No/Yes
Parent accompanying own child to event, but not serving in volunteer role (observer)	Indirect	No
Teen or Junior Leader	Youth	No
Public Event sponsored by another organization and an Extension volunteer is a Resource person/speaker	Episodic	No
Youth event sponsored by another organization but Extension is responsible for portion of the day	Direct	Yes

Youth Protection Standards Approved Prior Screening Entities

School Districts

Churches

Youth Groups/Associations

 Little League, Sports Association, etc.

Youth Agencies/Organizations

 Big Brother/Big Sister, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, After School/Extended Care Programs, etc.

Law Enforcement

 County, State or Federal law enforcement*

 Prison system

Texas Youth Commission

Department of Defense - Child and Youth Services

Department of Defense - Family Programs

Concealed Handgun License

Licensed Day Care Workers

Department of Homeland Security

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Volunteers may document a prior criminal background check from another entity on the volunteer application. The Texas AgriLife Extension Service will only accept screenings performed by entities on the approved list. The minimum requirement is a criminal background check conducted through DPS or a national criminal search entity.

Documentation may include a letter of acceptance from the employee or volunteer group, a letter written to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service stating the volunteer has been screened and passed, or a copy of the volunteer card or credentials (*Example*: copy of concealed handgun license). All information provided must be visible and readable.

If a volunteer claims prior screening, but it is not from an approved entity, he/she must be screened through the Youth Protection Standards Program.

Although volunteers may have been screened and passed a criminal background check through an approved entity, it is Extension's policy that volunteers be screened every three years, no matter the entity.

*Counties should not have county law enforcement (sheriff's department) screen volunteers for free or a minimal fee. This screening is a local, county search and does not search all records that the YPS search does. However, if a volunteer was screened through the county law enforcement for county employment purposes, that screening is accepted by Extension. Proof of screening with the past three years must be provided.



**Transmittal Form
For Volunteer Applications and
Background Check Forms**

District _____ County _____

Program Area _____
(Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Master Wellness, TEEA, EFNEP, BLT, etc.)
**4-H Volunteers – The Volunteer Screening Invoice (from 4-H CONNECT) should accompany
payment for volunteer screening.

Attached is:

_____ (#) Volunteer Applications or Volunteer Background Check Forms (in
alphabetical order by last name).

One check in the amount of \$_____ (\$10.00 per volunteer screening) made payable to
Extension Account #255003.

_____ (#) Volunteer Applications that have been screened through another entity. (No
payment needed.)

Send confirmation of screening results to the following:

Note: If a name/e-mail address is not listed, results will be sent to the county Extension office box.

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Mail one (1) copy of this form, along with applications to:
Texas 4-H Office
Youth Protection Standards
4180 State Highway 6
College Station, TX 77845

Keep one copy of this form in county files.

Signature (County Extension Agent)

Date

**Sample Letter
Volunteer Acceptance
Screened Through YPS**

We are pleased to welcome you as a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service _____
(*program area*) program volunteer in _____ County. We believe that you will
be a valuable addition to the _____ (*county or Extension*) program.

This letter is to notify you that you have been screened through the Youth Protection Standards
Program with the Volunteer Center of North Texas (the Texas Legislature required vendor) and
passed. You are fully qualified to serve in the volunteer position for which you applied,
including working with and supervising youth.

As a new Extension program volunteer you will have the opportunity to participate in many
training programs on the county, district, regional and state levels that are designed to strengthen
your subject matter skills, provide organizational and management ideas and support you in your
volunteer role. These trainings are scheduled throughout the year and you will be notified by
(*the county newsletter, a personal letter, a phone call, at leaders meetings, etc.*).

Enclosed is a volunteer certificate for your files. Once again, welcome to the Extension Program.
Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions. Thank you for your interest in
Extension.

Sincerely,

(*Name*)

(*Title*)

(*Program Area*)

Sample Letter Time for Re-Screening

Thank you for your interest in serving as a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service _____
(*program area*) program volunteer in _____ County. We believe that you will
be a valuable addition to the _____ (*county or Extension*) program.

This letter is to notify you that you need to be screened through the Youth Protection Standards Program. The volunteer background checks are conducted through the Volunteer Center of North Texas (the Texas Legislature required vendor).

If you have been screened and passed a criminal background check through another entity within the past three years, please let me know. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service accepts previous screenings from certain entities; however, proof of screening must be provided. A list of these entities may be obtained from the county Extension office.

In order to begin the screening process, please complete the volunteer application enclosed and return to the county Extension office by _____ (*date*). Please note that volunteers may not fulfill their duties until the criminal background check has been conducted and you have been approved as an Extension volunteer.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions. Thank you for your interest in Extension.

Sincerely,

(*Name*)

(*Title*)

(*Program Area*)

**Sample Letter
Volunteer Acceptance
Screened Through Extension-Approved Entities**

We are pleased to welcome you as a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service _____
(*program area*) program volunteer in _____ County. We believe that you will
be a valuable addition to the _____ (*county or Extension*) program.

This letter is to notify you that your previous screening conducted by another, approved entity
has been accepted. You are fully qualified to serve in the volunteer position for which you
applied, including working with and supervising youth.

As a new Extension program volunteer you will have the opportunity to participate in many
training programs on the county, district, regional and state levels that are designed to strengthen
your subject matter skills, provide organizational and management ideas and support you in your
volunteer role. These trainings are scheduled throughout the year and you will be notified by
(*the county newsletter, a personal letter, a phone call, at leaders meetings, etc.*).

Once again, welcome to the Extension Program. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have
any questions. Thank you for your interest in Extension.

Sincerely,

(*Name*)

(*Title*)

(*Program Area*)

Volunteer Application Form

And consent for criminal background history check authorization/waiver

To be completed by Extension program volunteers (EFNEP, BLT, etc.) and Master Volunteers only.

4-H volunteers must register online via 4-H CONNECT or by completing the 4-H Adult Volunteer Application (4-H 2-I.056)

Please print:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. APPLICANT'S FULL, LEGAL NAME _____ | 2. COUNTY _____ |
| 3. ADDRESS _____ | 4. CITY _____ ZIP _____ |
| 5. FIRST 5 DIGITS OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER _____ | 6. DATE OF BIRTH _____/_____/_____ |
| 7. DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER (optional) _____ | 8. GENDER (circle one) Male / Female |
| 9. Are you of Hispanic ethnicity? Yes / No
RACE (circle one) White / Black / Asian / American Indian
Alaskan Native / Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander | 10. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AREA _____ |

Previously Screened

11. I verify that I have been previously screened including a criminal background check and PASSED. Yes No
- If yes, by who? _____ When (Year): _____
- For what purpose? _____
- Did you pass? If not, what restrictions were imposed? _____
- If you have been screened and passed a criminal background check through an Extension-approved entity, a letter/proof must be submitted.

Please sign at the bottom of the form.

12. I hereby authorize VeriFYI and/or its Service Provider and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service to request and receive any and all background information about or concerning me, including, but not limited to, my Criminal History, Driving Record, Employment History, Military Background, Civil Listings, Educational Background, Professional License from any Individual, Corporation, Partnership, Law Enforcement Agency, and other entities including my Present and Past Employers. I authorize the Texas AgriLife Extension Service or any of its components to make reference checks relating to my volunteer service. I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility as a volunteer/employee with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.
- The criminal history, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data, as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct committed as a juvenile. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history as received by client/agency and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that the criminal history could contain information presumed to be expunged.
- I further release and discharge VeriFYI and their Service Provider and all of their Subsidiaries, Affiliates, Officers, Employees, Contract Personnel, or Associates, from any and all claims and liability arising out of any request for information or records pursuant to this authorization and/or procurement of an investigative consumer report and understand that it may contain information about my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, whichever are applicable.
- I understand that I have the right to make written request within a reasonable period of time to VeriFYI for additional information concerning the nature and scope of the investigation. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily provided the above information for employment/volunteer purposes, and I have carefully read and understand this authorization.

13. Date _____ 14. Applicant's Signature _____

Volunteer Application Form Instructions

1. Applicant's Printed Name – Complete with first name, middle name and last name.
2. County – Complete with the county name in which you are applying to be a volunteer.
- 3/4. Address – Complete with your current mailing address, city and zip code.
5. Social Security Number – Complete with at least the **first five** digits of the social security number. The social security number is an individual descriptor that enables the system to complete a national criminal search of 47 jurisdictions.
6. Date of Birth – Complete with the month, day and year of birth.
7. Driver's License Number – Complete with current driver's license number and state. Although optional, this helps affirm your identity during a background check.
8. Gender – Complete by circling one of the options.
9. Race – Complete the race and ethnicity section by circling the answers that apply. This field is optional; however, it is very important in confirming accurate identity.
10. Volunteer Program Area – Complete with the program area you are volunteering for (e.g., Better Living for Texans, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Master Wellness Volunteer).
**4-H volunteers should complete the Texas 4-H Adult Volunteer Application (4-H 2-1.056).*
11. Previously Screened – Texas AgriLife Extension Service will accept prior screenings conducted within the past three years from other entities. The approved list of prior screenings either as an employee or volunteer include: school districts, churches, youth groups/associations (Little League, sports associations, etc.), youth agencies/organizations (Big Brother/Big Sister, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, after school/extended care programs), law enforcement (county, state or federal/prison system), Texas Youth Commission, Department of Defense – Child and Youth Services, Department of Defense – Family Programs, concealed handgun license; and/or licensed childcare workers.
** The minimum requirement is a criminal background check conducted through DPS or a National Criminal Search entity.**
*** Other sources may be considered based on documentation provided with screening criteria and specifics.***
**** Documentation is required for screenings from other entities. This could include a letter of acceptance from the employer or volunteer group, or a letter written from the screening entity to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service stating you have been screened and tested.*
12. Authorization Statement – State agencies screening volunteers are required by legislation to use the Volunteer Center of North Texas. The Volunteer Center contracts with VeriFYI. VeriFYI is a background verification software system that accesses multi-jurisdiction checks utilizing one of the largest private-sector criminal history databases in the nation (180 million records). All information received is held in confidence and not shared at the county level. Criminal record results are shredded when a volunteer's status is determined.
13. Date Completed
14. Applicant's Signature