



Volunteer Background Check Review & Screening Policy

Purpose

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission is committed to providing a safe environment for our clients, staff, volunteers, and community members. Background screenings are used as one part of our volunteer selection process to help ensure that individuals serving with our organization are appropriate for the responsibilities associated with their volunteer role.

CVRM conducts this screening through CVRM's in-house background check system and personnel, and, where CVRM determines it is appropriate, through the California Department of Justice (DOJ) Live Scan process and/or an outside screening provider.

A background check does not automatically disqualify an individual from volunteering, except as described under Disqualifying Offenses below. Each situation will be reviewed carefully, consistently, and fairly based on the nature of the information provided.

Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers who are required to complete a background screening as part of the volunteer application process, and, on an ongoing basis, throughout their volunteer service with CVRM.

Background Check Process

Volunteers may be required to:

- Complete a volunteer application
- Provide authorization for a background screening, including CVRM's in-house screening system
- Provide accurate identifying information needed to complete the screening process
- Complete a Live Scan (DOJ/FBI fingerprint-based) criminal history check, when required for the volunteer's role
- Participate in additional review steps if information is identified that requires clarification
- Complete a new background check or Live Scan at any point during their volunteer service, when requested by CVRM

Live Scan Fingerprint-Based Criminal History Checks

Certain volunteer roles — particularly those involving direct contact with, or supervision of, minors — require a Live Scan fingerprint-based criminal history check through the California DOJ and FBI, consistent with California Penal Code section 11105.3 and California's Assembly Bill 506 (Business & Professions Code section 18975).

Under AB 506, a “regular volunteer” is a volunteer age 18 or older who has direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year. Regular volunteers, and any other volunteer CVRM designates, must also complete training in child abuse and neglect identification and reporting before beginning service in that role.

Live Scan results are processed through CVRM's in-house background check system. CVRM's designated Custodian of Records is responsible for the security, storage, limited disclosure, and proper destruction of any criminal history information (CORI) CVRM receives, consistent with California Penal Code requirements.



Ongoing & Point-in-Time Rescreening

A background check or Live Scan reflects a volunteer's record only as of the date it is completed. To help close that gap, CVRM may require a volunteer to complete a new background check and/or Live Scan at any point during their volunteer service — not only at initial application. This may occur, for example:

- On a periodic basis, at intervals CVRM sets based on the volunteer's role and level of contact with clients or minors
- When a volunteer moves into a new position or an increased level of contact with clients or minors
- When a concern arises about a volunteer's conduct or suitability
- When needed to maintain compliance with applicable law (such as AB 506) or a funder's or insurer's requirements

Where CVRM is authorized to do so, CVRM may enroll volunteers in DOJ's Subsequent Arrest Notification Service so that CVRM is automatically notified if a volunteer is arrested after their Live Scan record is on file. CVRM will file a “No Longer Interested” notice with DOJ within a reasonable time after a volunteer's service ends.

A volunteer's refusal or failure to complete a requested background check or rescreen may result in suspension or termination of volunteer service.

Disqualifying Offenses

Regardless of volunteer role, CVRM will not accept or continue a volunteer whose background check reveals any of the following. These offenses result in automatic disqualification and are not subject to the individualized review described below:

- Any offense requiring registration as a sex offender under California Penal Code section 290
- A conviction for child abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- A conviction for elder or dependent adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- A conviction for a violent felony, including but not limited to murder, kidnapping, or assault with a deadly weapon
- A conviction for arson

All other criminal history is reviewed individually under Review of Background Information, below.

Review of Background Information

If potentially concerning information is identified, CVRM will review the information and consider:

- Whether the record belongs to the applicant
- Whether there was a conviction, dismissal, or other case outcome
- The nature and seriousness of the offense
- How much time has passed since the incident
- Evidence of rehabilitation or positive changes
- Whether the information relates to the volunteer responsibilities
- The level of contact the volunteer will have with clients, including children, families, vulnerable adults, or confidential information

Examples of Information That May Require Additional Review

Additional review may be required for records involving:

- Violence or threats of harm
- Abuse, neglect, or exploitation



- Crimes involving vulnerable populations
- Theft, fraud, or misuse of funds
- Serious offenses that may impact the safety of clients, staff, or volunteers

Volunteer Opportunity Decision

After review, CVRM may:

- Approve the volunteer application
- Approve the volunteer application with limitations or additional requirements
- Request additional information
- Determine that the volunteer opportunity is not appropriate based on safety considerations

Decisions will be made consistently and will not be based solely on the existence of a record, other than the offenses listed under Disqualifying Offenses.

Confidentiality

Background screening information, including any Live Scan / CORI results, will be treated as confidential and shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to review the information as part of the volunteer screening process. Records will be stored securely and destroyed in accordance with DOJ retention guidance and CVRM's records policy.



Volunteer Background Check FAQ

Why does CVRM complete background checks?

Background checks help us maintain a safe environment for clients, staff, volunteers, and the community we serve.

Does having something on my record automatically prevent me from volunteering?

In most cases, no. Most background information is reviewed individually — we consider the nature of the record, the outcome, how much time has passed, and whether it relates to the volunteer role. A small number of serious offenses, listed under Disqualifying Offenses, do result in automatic disqualification.

Will I have an opportunity to explain information found on my background check?

Yes. If additional review is needed, we will provide an opportunity for you to share information or clarification.

Who has access to my background information?

Background information is kept confidential and is only shared with individuals who need the information as part of the screening process.

Why are some volunteer roles screened more carefully, or require Live Scan fingerprinting?

Some volunteer positions involve interaction with children, families, vulnerable adults, confidential information, or other responsibilities requiring additional safety measures. California law (AB 506) requires a DOJ/FBI Live Scan fingerprint check, plus training, for volunteers who regularly have direct contact with or supervise minors.

Will I need to complete a background check or Live Scan more than once?

You may. A background check or Live Scan reflects your record only as of the date it's completed, so CVRM may require you to complete a new check or Live Scan at any point during your volunteer service — for example, periodically, if your role changes, or if a concern is raised — not only when you first apply.

What happens after my Live Scan is on file?

Where CVRM is authorized to do so, DOJ may automatically notify CVRM if you are later arrested, through DOJ's Subsequent Arrest Notification Service. CVRM will ask DOJ to stop this notification once your volunteer service ends.

We appreciate your willingness to serve and partner with us in supporting our community.