



# Volunteer Screening Trends & Best Practices Report: 2018

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# A Note From Katie Zwetzig

## Executive Director, Verified Volunteers

2017 was an exciting year for Verified Volunteers. We were honored to welcome many new nonprofit members (and volunteers too) into the Verified Volunteers community. To be a part of a group of organizations that are a driving force for change and good in their communities is humbling.

Knowing that it is a privilege to serve those working in the nonprofit community, we make it a point to uphold ongoing dialogues with both clients and non-clients. We want to understand the topics that are important to you – what will help you implement change more safely, more effectively and with greater peace of mind. With that information, we can deliver product enhancements (over 60 in the past year), resources and best practices to help you reach your mission.



To get more insight into the relevant topics for our nonprofit partners, we conducted – for the third year in a row – a survey focusing on volunteer screening and volunteer program management. This year’s survey was the largest yet, with over 900 responses. We asked many of the same questions as the previous year – and some new ones too. The goal is to provide you with data you can use to benchmark your volunteer program against your peers and to show you what’s changing year-to-year in terms of screening trends, nonprofit budgets, training programs and more.

Reviewing the results of the survey in the past three years, it has been fascinating to look at the shifts in background screening trends for volunteer organizations. For example, we found that there is a growing number of organizations who are moving towards rescreening their volunteers on a more frequent basis. It is also eye-opening to note that many organizations are not following best practices when it comes to compliance and the FCRA. We have provided tips within the report to help guide organizations in the right direction to make sure their volunteer screening programs are compliant.

I am pleased to introduce Verified Volunteers’ Volunteer Screening Trends & Best Practices Report: 2018. Please read through for revealing results, insights and tips on volunteer screening – and enjoy! Let’s get ready for an even more exciting 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Zwetzig".

**Katie Zwetzig,**  
**Executive Director, Verified Volunteers**

# A Note From Natalye Paquin

## President & CEO, Points of Light

We are pleased to partner again with Verified Volunteers to produce the Volunteer Screening Trends & Best Practices Report: 2018. As the largest organization in the world dedicated to volunteering and service, it is pertinent for us to uncover trends among volunteer leaders and to draw insights into what those trends say about the service sector. This report has allowed us to do just that for three years running.



As leaders in the volunteering and service sector, we are witnessing a shift in what service means and what it looks like. It is fascinating to observe the evolution and rapid rise of social networks, constant innovations in technology and a growing leadership crisis. By understanding the new and emerging trends in volunteerism and volunteer management, we can envision and shape a new wave of civic activism.

The findings in this report are designed to help volunteer managers advance their volunteer programs by understanding the direction in which the sector is moving; comparing their programs to those of similar organizations; and gaining best practices which, if adhered to, will allow the goodwill of committed volunteers to be converted into greater impact.

At Points of Light, we help millions of volunteers change the world. We mobilize people to take action to support the causes they care about. We were moved to partner with Verified Volunteers because both our organizations are inspired by the same thing – making it easier for volunteers to do good in their communities by working seamlessly with many organizations. Verified Volunteers does this by equipping volunteers with a background check that is sharable across volunteer programs. Findings in this new report indicate that sharable background checks like these can provide benefits on both the volunteer side and the organization side. Volunteers can more easily get involved in their community because staff have greater confidence in volunteers who have been screened. Organizations can reserve budget dollars because they do not have to pay to screen pre-vetted volunteers. It's a tool that will help promote giving back – and we can all agree that that is a good thing.

We look forward to sharing and studying these findings with our partners and working collectively to continue advancing and enhancing the volunteer infrastructure of the world to ignite civic culture where every person is inspired, equipped and mobilized to be a citizen in the fullest sense.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natalye Paquin'.

**Natalye Paquin,**  
President & Chief Executive Officer



## Executive Summary

Volunteer Screening Trends & Best Practices Report: 2018, researched and produced by Verified Volunteers, offers essential insights on the practices, challenges and concerns of organizations that rely on dedicated volunteers.

The survey, administered in July and August 2017, includes data from both Verified Volunteers clients and an external panel of relevant organizations, all of which conduct some form of background screening on their volunteers. The responses demonstrate that despite the differences in the services each organization provides, many face similar challenges when it comes to managing their volunteer programs. Some notable findings from this survey include:

1

**There is a wide variation among types of criminal record searches that organizations conduct. Use of most types of criminal searches is increasing**

2

**Renewal screening is increasing**

3

**While rising slightly, volunteer screening expense remains a small percentage of most organizations' volunteer budgets**

The data contained in this report is designed to help volunteer managers, executive directors and others involved with volunteer programs see how their organizations measure up against others and identify ways they can improve their volunteer program. This report explores issues beyond background screening, such as how organizations train volunteers, the legal and policy challenges of various screening practices and tools, and strategies for reducing screening time and cost. By using benchmarking information to compare and analyze current practices and strategies, organizations can evolve and grow to meet the growing demand for their services.





# Survey Overview and Methodology

## Background and objectives

As an industry leader in volunteer screening, Verified Volunteers surveyed organizations to better understand their screening needs and processes. Specifically, the survey gathered data relating to seven main topics:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1</b> Motivation for conducting volunteer screening</li> <li><b>2</b> Challenges and barriers associated with volunteer screening</li> <li><b>3</b> Types of background checks conducted on volunteers</li> <li><b>4</b> Types of volunteers screened</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5</b> Confidence in screening results</li> <li><b>6</b> Screening outcomes and perceived value</li> <li><b>7</b> General challenges with volunteer programs</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Methodology

Results of the online survey, conducted in July and August 2017, are based on the responses of U.S. professionals who work for nonprofit organizations that conduct background checks on their volunteers.

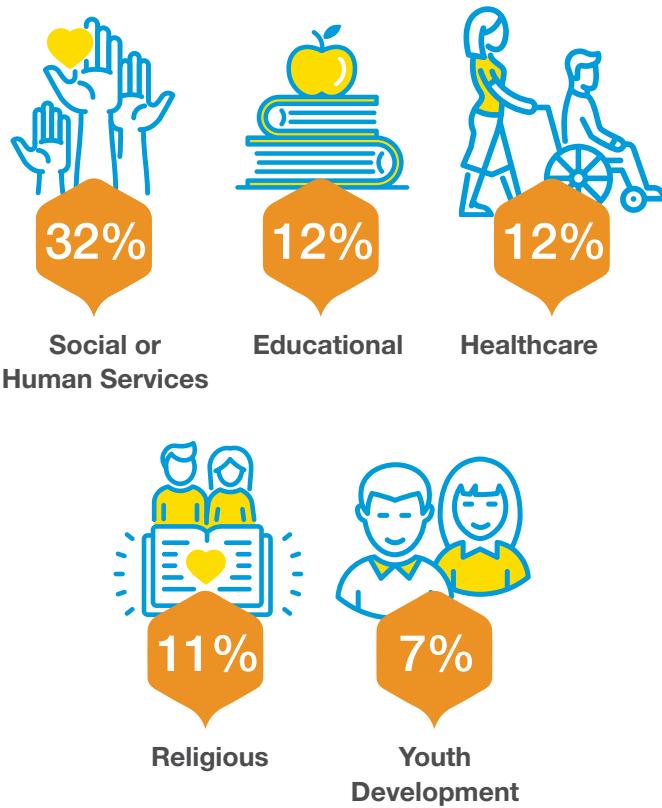
A randomized sample of Verified Volunteers clients was invited to participate in the survey as well as additional professionals who oversee volunteer programs. A total of 967 respondents participated in the survey. The margin of error for the study is +/- at the 95% confidence level.

Some of the survey questions allowed for multiple responses, in which case totals may not add up to 100%. Additionally, some survey answers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

# Profile of Responding Organizations

## Type of organization

Social or Human Services were the largest group at **32%**, followed by Educational and Healthcare, both at **12%**, and Religious at **11%**. Youth Development accounted for **7%**, a significant drop since our 2017 report, when 12.87% of respondents were organizations devoted to youth development.



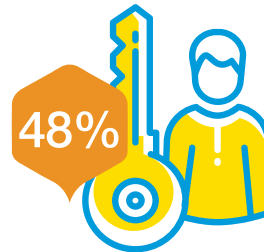
## Serving vulnerable populations

**More than three-quarters (77.84%)** of the organizations surveyed serve a vulnerable population, such as the elderly, children, or the disabled.



## Key decision makers

**In almost half of organizations**, responsibility for key decisions involving volunteers belongs to the volunteer or community manager (47.93%). In slightly fewer organizations (43.24%), the executive director makes key decisions involving volunteers.



**COMING IN 2018!** We have heard from clients and prospects alike that they would like an easier way to recruit volunteers. We are excited to add volunteer recruiting to the Verified Volunteers lineup later this year, making recruiting pre-vetted volunteers simpler than ever.

## Approximate number of volunteers

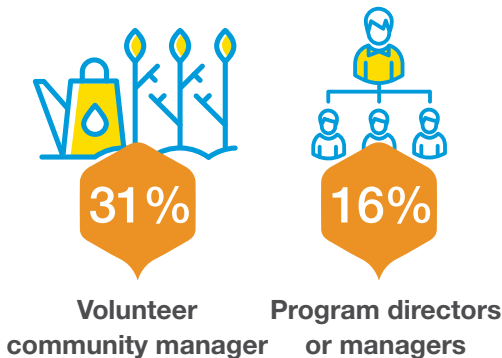
**More than one out of five responding organizations** has more than 1,000 volunteers (22.32%). Last year, that number was only 10.71%.



**How many volunteers does your organization have?** Fewer than 250? If you answered “yes,” good news! Verified Volunteers now offers an easy way for you to sign up online, on your own, in minutes. **For more information, email us at [info@verifiedvolunteers.com](mailto:info@verifiedvolunteers.com).**

### Job title

Volunteer community managers make up 30.71% of respondents. Program directors or managers make up 16.13% of respondents. Twelve percent of respondents are in executive roles in their organizations.



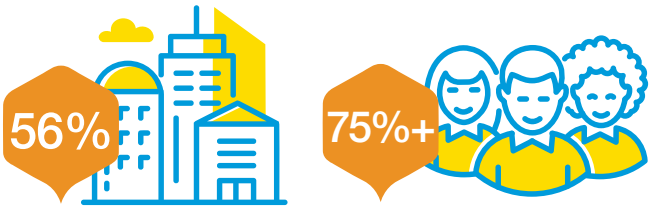
### Annual budget

**Forty-four percent of organizations have budgets of \$1 million-plus**, compared to slightly over 38% in our 2017 report. In the highest budget category, 4.5% of organizations have budgets of \$100 million or more. While that is a small percentage, it is more than triple the number of organizations with such a budget in our 2017 report. On the other end of the spectrum, **only 21% of organizations have budgets of under \$500,000**, compared to 30.62% in our 2017 report.



### Staff composition

In general, responding organizations rely heavily on unpaid volunteers. When asked to consider all paid employees and unpaid volunteers across their organizations, **56% of organizations indicated that unpaid volunteers make up 75% or more** of their staff. That is up very slightly from our 2017 report, when 54.55% of organizations indicated that unpaid volunteers make up 75% or more of staff. Two-thirds of organizations have staff that are at least half unpaid volunteers and only nine percent of organizations have staff composed of 10% or fewer unpaid volunteers.



### Areas of responsibility

The most common responsibilities of respondents include volunteer recruiting (85.73%), volunteer program management (85.11%) and volunteer training (84.28%). Other job functions include public relations/marketing/communications (56.43%), development/fundraising (46.88%), advocacy (37.07%), finance/budgets (35.80%) and HR and employee recruiting (both approximately 29%).





# Screening Practices

Background screening is complicated. This is due to a confluence of factors, including the sheer amount of data available—data that may or may not accurately reflect the most up-to-date facts about volunteers. People move, have multiple jobs, and marry and divorce more frequently than in the past. Using a third-party screening provider, as the majority of organizations surveyed are, helps to dig through the data clutter.

## How organizations conduct background checks

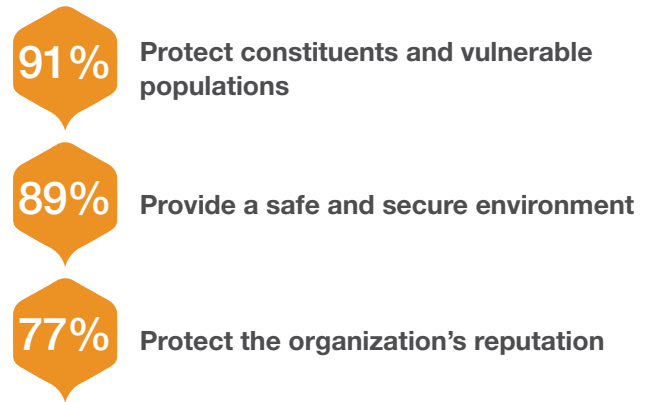
The majority of organizations (53.61%) use an external third-party service provider to conduct volunteer background checks. The remaining organizations go directly to a government source (26.31%) or perform checks in-house (15.98%).

Just under half (47.17%) of responding organizations conduct background checks on all volunteers before they come on board. One-third conduct background checks some of the time; 18% do not conduct background checks. Among sectors, 31% of social or human services nonprofits and 17% of healthcare-related nonprofits conduct background checks all the time. At the other end of the spectrum, only one percent of schools and higher education organizations conduct background checks all the time.

## Why organizations conduct background checks

While each organization has different goals and objectives, most have similar reasons for screening volunteers.

**Two of the top three goals relate to safety:**



**The three goals lower on the list relate to efficiency and management:**



### SURVEY RESPONSES: why organizations screen

Our survey respondents described a range of other reasons for committing to perform background checks. Most organizations are required to do some sort of screening: “It’s a federal requirement for hospice agencies.” “Grant compliance.” Screening may be an insurance or Medicare requirement. Legal considerations, such as avoiding corporate and director liability, also come into play. Finally, respondents cited employee engagement as a reason for screening: “To increase staff confidence in the volunteers.”





### Who gets screened

Almost half of organizations screen all volunteers regardless of their position or how often they volunteer. Those working with vulnerable populations (children, elderly, and the disabled) are most likely to be screened (54.43% of organizations screen this group), whereas short-term, one-time and infrequent volunteers are least likely to be screened—only 11.76% of organizations screen this group.

In other words, **88.24% of organizations are not screening short-term, one-time, and infrequent volunteers.** This opens those organizations up to tremendous risk. Even a one-time volunteer could endanger your organization and its mission. A single act of embezzlement, sexual abuse, or violence causes harm to employees, volunteers, constituents and clients as well as to morale and reputation.

### Types of background checks used

The most commonly used checks are criminal and sex offender: More than nine of ten organizations conduct criminal record checks, while almost three of four use a sex offender search in their screening.



## DIGGING DEEPER: ID verification and new technology

ID verification gives organizations an added layer of security, protecting against the possibility that a volunteer candidate has submitted a false social security number or government-issued identification for the background check. Today, advanced photo technologies can help verify that an ID used in a screening process is a legitimate government-issued ID.

Verified Volunteers has an identity validation product, ID Confirm, that verifies ID legitimacy, confirms that the particular ID you are screening is issued to the person you are screening, and even helps extract information from the ID to help run the background check. For more information or a demo of ID Confirm, email us at [info@verifiedvolunteers.com](mailto:info@verifiedvolunteers.com) or call at **855.326.1860 Option 2**.



Volunteer candidates who can use mobile technologies to order their background checks can also validate their IDs with their own mobile devices.

**When incorporating ID verification tools, organizations should:**

**Avoid storage of photo ID images** or other personally identifiable information (PII) unless encrypted



**Use the PII on the volunteer candidate's ID** as the basis for the background check. If some of that information is outdated (not reflecting subsequent moves or changes in marital status), manual verification of the changed data is necessary

**Have the volunteer present the ID in person** if the ID can't be validated through mobile technology. It make not be a fake, but merely of low quality.

**Have the volunteer manually submit their background check order** if they do not have a government-issued ID or access to mobile technology. After the check is complete, have the volunteer present their ID in person, then determine whether to continue or disband the onboarding process

## Types of criminal record searches

**There is a wide variation among types of criminal record searches that organizations conduct.**

Two-thirds of responding organizations conduct sex offender searches, but only 27.36% of organizations search neglect and abuse records. Just over half of organizations undertake current state-county searches and nationwide-multistate database searches. Only around four in ten organizations look at local arrests/sheriff's office records and federal databases. Other criminal record searches include prior address county-state searches (conducted by 36.48% of organizations) and alias/maiden name searches (conducted by 31.67% of organizations.)

Primary criminal background checks should begin with court record searches in each county where a candidate has lived. It is also a good practice to search under each name they have used as an adult (maiden and married, for instance). This method, however, does not cover instances in which a candidate committed a crime in a different location. Locator Select, Verified Volunteers' proprietary technology, helps to cover that gap by integrating with over 2,000 booking and incarceration sites, covering over 70% of the US incarcerated population, to identify more counties where a crime may have been committed. If a candidate was incarcerated in a county other than one they lived in or one not included in the multijurisdictional National Database, Locator Select may find it and add it to the search.

### DIGGING DEEPER: the FBI check

FBI checks should not be your sole source of criminal information. FBI checks rely on county and state courthouse data reporting, and there are no laws or regulations obligating these local entities to report such data to the FBI. More than half of US states report a backlog of criminal disposition data, meaning that, for instance, a volunteer candidate who was arrested may not have had this arrest reported to the FBI. Thus it is possible, if not probable, that an FBI check will provide you with old information that does not accurately reflect your volunteer candidate's full history.

## Fingerprinting

Only one third of organizations use fingerprinting as a component of volunteer screening. And since one fourth of organizations are required to fingerprint some or all volunteers, it is safe to conclude that most organizations that use fingerprinting are doing so only because it is a requirement.

**Recommendation:** Double-check fingerprinting requirements. They may have changed, and you may be able to switch to another reliable and convenient method of background scrutiny.

## Communication with candidates about screening

**The vast majority of organizations are upfront with volunteer candidates about background screening.** 85.82% explain their screening program and what they are looking for; two-thirds contact candidates to clarify inconsistencies; more than half share concerning information; and four in ten organizations update volunteer candidates when there is a delay due to screening.

### DIGGING DEEPER: deciphering data sources

Big data is getting bigger. The untold and increasing data sources in the United States include more than 3,500 county databases and thousands of sheriff's offices and corrections facilities. But **there is no centralized US system that provides comprehensive up-to-date criminal record information.** Instead, there are different screening locator tools that serve as building blocks of a complete background check. And **there is no standard for data within nationwide databases, which could contain 20 years of data—or two.** A nationwide database is merely a snapshot in time, with criminal records and other information that may be stale. That's why the most thorough background searches rely on a combination of tools and databases to minimize gaps in the information you receive.

How do you know if the data you are receiving is adequate to protect your organization? Asking your screening provider the following questions will help to reveal flaws or gaps:

- **Why** do my results come back so quickly?
- **What** jurisdictions does your database cover in my region, specifically my county and state?
- **How** often are your search records refreshed?
- **Are you** going to the primary source – the courthouse?
- **Are my results** compliant with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)?

Any screener that can't provide good answers to these questions may be shortchanging your security.



**DIGGING DEEPER:  
Not all sex offender searches are equal**

For many organizations, a background check is not complete without a sex offender search. However, simply checking a local sex offender registry is insufficient. The Dru Sjodin Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) is the only real-time comprehensive sex offender search. Ask for it by name. Do not settle for other national sex offender registries, which may contain outdated or incomplete records.



**When checks return criminal results**

While the vast majority of volunteer applicants will sail through the screening process, most organizations who perform background screening will disqualify a few candidates as a result.

Seven of ten organizations report that background checks revealed issues they would not have found otherwise. Types of information revealed range from sexual assault (28.34% of organizations report that background checks revealed at least one), violent felony crimes (34.29% report at least one) to driving convictions (70.02% report at least one) and misdemeanor felony crimes (74.13% of organizations report that background checks revealed at least one).

**1/2 of organizations disqualify only a small minority of volunteers whose checks return criminal results**

While one in ten organizations automatically disqualify all volunteer applicants with criminal convictions, 49.42% disqualify only one-fourth or fewer of applicants with such convictions.

**60% of organizations perform individualized assessments on volunteer applicants with criminal records, allowing them to explain the circumstances of their convictions**

**15% of organizations send both pre-adverse and adverse action notices to disqualified candidates**

**Confidence in criminal data**

Almost all organizations express some confidence in the accuracy and thoroughness of the criminal data returned about their volunteers.

27%

are extremely confident

48%

are very confident

22%

are somewhat confident

**Frequency of criminal results**

**The more thorough the background check, the more likely you are to find a fairly significant increase in the number of criminal convictions.**

More than half of organizations report that only one to two percent of checks return criminal convictions for a misdemeanor or felony, and one in five organizations report no convictions. But 6.81% of organizations report that at least five percent of their screenings return criminal convictions. That is a drop since our 2017 report, when 10.68% of organizations reported that at least five percent of screenings returned criminal convictions. Organizations using the most thorough Verified Volunteers background check package see an average criminal conviction rate of 5.9%. This is higher for sports organizations, who see a 10.8% criminal conviction rate.

**SURVEY RESPONSES:  
what background checks revealed**

Our survey respondents reported a wide range of specific information revealed through background checks on their volunteer candidates. The findings ranged from outstanding arrest warrants and domestic violence convictions to issues that dated back to candidates' college years, such as bar fights, DUI convictions, and minor drug possession convictions. Other findings included bad checks, embezzlement, and drug use.





### Adverse Action: an introduction

Adverse Action is a two-step process that organizations are required to follow under the Federal Fair Credit Act (FCRA) when a volunteer position might be denied as the result of a background check. The two steps consist of a pre-adverse notice, sent prior to making a final decision, followed by a notification of adverse action, sent after a decision not to onboard. Candidates are sent a copy of their background check report with the pre-adverse notice so that they can dispute information found in the report.

Your Adverse Action process should:

- **Include steps for both Pre-Adverse and Adverse Action notifications**
- **Include the candidate’s background report, the FCRA-required “Summary of Rights” and any appropriate state summary of rights,** with your Pre-Adverse Action notice and any other relevant information required by a jurisdiction
- **Give the candidate adequate time** to respond and dispute findings
- **Take into consideration** Ban the Box laws that require a reason for an adverse decision

### ...The deciding factor for disqualification is the type of criminal conviction returned:

- 94%** of organizations say a sexual assault record is a deal-breaker for volunteer applicants
- 94%** say a felony conviction for a violent crime is a deal-breaker
- 72%** say a misdemeanor conviction for a violent crime is a deal-breaker
- 55%** say a felony conviction for a nonviolent crime is a deal-breaker
- 30%** say a driving conviction is a deal-breaker
- 17%** say a misdemeanor conviction for a nonviolent crime will cause them to drop the application

### DIGGING DEEPER: Explaining the background check to candidates

“Don’t you trust me?” is a common response of first-time volunteer candidates when they learn they will be required to undergo a background check. What should your answer be?



Tell the candidate that you trust them, but that unfortunately, not all volunteer applicants have pure intentions. Let them know that background checks are as much for their safety as for the safety of the people your organization serves. And know that at the end of the day, a good screening process is a selling point for your organization and all its stakeholders.



## Renewal background checks

The fact that a volunteer clears a background check does not guarantee that volunteer will keep a clean record forever. Organizations should have a rescreening policy for volunteers. Base it on position and/or time. For instance, those working directly with vulnerable populations should be rescreened more frequently than those in administrative or back-office positions.

**All renewal screening has increased, in every volunteer category, and doubled among short-term volunteer positions since our 2017 report.**

- 21%** of organizations rescreen all volunteers, up from 19.82% last year
- 25%** of organizations screen those working with vulnerable populations every year, up from 21.07% last year
- 19%** of organizations screen those in long-term volunteer positions every year, up very slightly from last year
- 20%** of organizations screen those in short-term volunteer positions every year, up from 10.34% last year
- 17%** of organizations screen those in administrative or back office positions every year, up from 13.04% last year

# Challenges in Volunteer Screening

Surprisingly, cost is not the biggest challenge that background screenings present to organizations. Their biggest challenge is the time and administrative energy they spend on background screening.

## SURVEY RESPONSES: Bureaucracy and time are bigger challenges than money

When asked to name their biggest challenges, our survey respondents focused more on bureaucratic problems, such as “the length of time it takes to receive approval or denial from DHS” and “the lack of a seamless process.”



“The police department does our screening,” said one respondent, “and there isn’t always a quick turnaround.” Another organization said its volunteers tend to be older than 55, which means that fingerprinting is “unnerving, difficult, and often needs to be repeated due to their age.” At the other end of the spectrum, an organization that uses mostly college-age volunteers finds getting screening results from the students’ home regions difficult.

Organizations that conduct their own screenings in-house run into still another set of issues.

“People do not want to provide their Social Security numbers,” said one respondent and, according to another, the biggest issues are “trying to figure out what items to screen for” and “consistency across the multiple staff members who screen.”

## CASE STUDY: Carle Foundation

*The nonprofit parent company of an integrated network of hospital and healthcare services, Carle Foundation brings on and screens more than 2,000 volunteers annually, including college students, teens, and an auxiliary. The foundation had many of the problems our survey respondents mentioned: doing background checks manually through its HR department was time-consuming and inefficient. Then a student who had passed the check committed a sexual assault during their first semester on campus—a fact that was revealed to the director of volunteer services via Twitter, and which indicated the manual background checks were also inadequate. Carle Foundation switched to Verified Volunteers, which offers automated monthly criminal checks of current volunteers. Problems of both inefficiency and inadequacy solved.*

**Background screening is the second costliest aspect of organizations’ volunteer programs, behind staffing.** Three of ten organizations said staff is the biggest cost of their volunteer programs, while one-fourth said it is volunteer screening. Recruiting was named the biggest cost by 16 percent of organizations.

**One out of three organizations cite time and administration of screening as their biggest challenge.**





**One out of four organizations cite expense of screening as their biggest challenge.** Less concerning is repeat screening of volunteers from other organizations (10.42% cite this as biggest), poor volunteer experience (4.71%) and low-quality checks (3.87%).

**For most organizations, background screening of volunteers is a relatively small percentage of their volunteer budget. But it's growing.**

That's slightly up from our 2017 report, when six in ten organizations (58.56%) spent one-quarter or less of their volunteer budget on screening volunteers, and 41.22% spent under 5%.

**In dollar terms, slightly more than one-third of organizations spent an average of \$15 or less per volunteer screening, while one in five organizations spent an average of \$31 or more per screening.**

**50%** spent one-quarter or less of their volunteer budget on screening volunteers

**39%** almost four in ten organizations spent under 5% on screening

**CASE STUDY: Girl Scouts of Maine**

*An organization that uses 4,000 volunteers, many of them busy working parents, Girl Scouts of Maine was stymied by a painfully slow volunteer onboarding process that discouraged many volunteers from committing to the organization. Outsourcing background checks shortened the overall onboarding process from seven to two weeks—and freed up staff time for other activities.*

**DIGGING DEEPER: Trends in youth sports**

Many youth sports groups run the bare minimum background checks on volunteers and staff who are responsible for keeping children safe on and off the playing field. In fact, many youth sports groups don't use the Dru Sjodin Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW), citing the fact that the NSOPW website is more labor-intensive. This is a gap that should be closed. One way is for organizations to ask potential volunteers to help defray the cost of their own background checks (see page 18). Another is to leverage the resources of the large publicly traded companies, like ESPN, that are buying youth sports organizations. Big companies will have access to more resources for young athletes—including the quality background checks that will keep them safe.



**Some organizations ask volunteers to help defray the costs of their own background checks.** About 11% of organizations give volunteer candidates an opportunity to contribute to the costs. About nine percent require volunteer candidates to pay the entire cost and three percent require candidates to pay for some of their check.

**When considering the benefits of volunteer contributions to background checks, remember the intangibles.** A small percentage of organizations experience more than 50% cost savings from volunteer contributions, but that may not be their most important effect. Contributing to screening costs may help strengthen the connection that volunteers feel toward your organization.

#### **CASE STUDY: Destination Imagination**

*A volunteer-led nonprofit in Colorado that equips students to lead and innovate, Destination Imagination uses 1,000 volunteers. But the organization found that its background check process with the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was cumbersome and slow. After switching to Verified Volunteers, the nonprofit asked volunteer candidates to contribute to the cost of their checks. The candidates “didn’t even blink” at this request. An added bonus: many of the Destination Imagination volunteers had already been vetted by Verified Volunteers with other nonprofits, so results could be shared, leading to a time and cost efficiency.*

**DID YOU KNOW?** Verified Volunteers integrates with over 20 volunteer management systems. For more information, **email us at [info@verifiedvolunteers.com](mailto:info@verifiedvolunteers.com)**.

#### **Digging deeper: Connect with your volunteers emotionally and financially**

Even if—and especially if—a volunteer is serving only to complete a community service requirement or the like, you can help them to forge an emotional connection with your cause. You may feel embarrassed about asking them to contribute to the costs of their background check but don’t. Know that most volunteers want to give back and the more they connect with your organization, the more they may want to give. In fact, organizations using the Verified Volunteers platform for background screening see average volunteer payment/contribution of 35%. So keep your volunteers up to date with your activities and ask them to follow your social media posts. Use every tool to tell them about your organization and be transparent. Let them know exactly what their time and treasure is going for. The more you communicate, the more others will understand and give.





Reducing screening costs is the main area in which organizations would like to improve their volunteer screening program. When asked in what area organizations would like to improve volunteer screening, three in ten said they would like to reduce screening costs.

Overall, organizations are more optimistic about the future of volunteers at their organizations than they were a year ago. Six in ten organizations are more optimistic, while only 11% are less optimistic. Three in ten organizations feel the same level of optimism about their volunteers that they did a year ago.

Most organizations are relatively satisfied with their screening programs for volunteers. Six of ten organizations expect to make no changes in their programs in the coming year. About one in five intend to screen more volunteers. Other changes mentioned are integrating screening better with other volunteer management tools and increasing rescreening.

- 26%
one in four organizations would like to reduce onboarding time
- 24%
would like to improve the volunteer screening experience
- 24%
would like to improve screening turnaround time

# Useful Resources

Interested in learning more about volunteer screening and volunteer program management? Check out our website, [verifiedvolunteers.com](https://www.verifiedvolunteers.com), for these and many other resources:

## eBook

- Enhancing the Volunteer Lifecycle

## White papers

- To Screen or Not to Screen? Four Reasons You May Not be Screening Your Volunteers... And Why You Need to Start
- Counting the Cost of a Bad Volunteer: Why Volunteer Screening Is the Most Critical Step of the Onboarding Process

## Articles

- Practical Recommendations for Validating Volunteer Identification
- Your Adverse Action Checklist: Getting It Right

## And more

- Return on Volunteer Investment Calculator: Is Your Volunteer Program Paying Off?
- Making the Case for Your Volunteer Program Budget

**Stay informed of volunteer management best practices by attending our live and on-demand webinars.** Many of our webinars can be used to meet the requirements for renewing the Certified in Volunteer Administration (CVA) credential. We now offer closed captioning on our on-demand webinars.



Verified Volunteers helps nonprofit organizations gain confidence in the volunteers working with those they serve by delivering thorough, compliant background checks. By enabling volunteers to order, manage and share their background checks via a secure online platform, we create a community of vetted volunteers and help nonprofit organizations save time and money. Our extensive expertise in screening and compliance best practices help clients recruit the best volunteers in order to maintain a safe environment and positive reputation. Verified Volunteers is backed by Sterling Talent Solutions, the world's largest background screening company and partnered with Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service.

For more information, visit [www.verifiedvolunteers.com](http://www.verifiedvolunteers.com).



Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service, mobilizes millions of people to take action that is changing the world. Through affiliates in 250 cities and partnerships with thousands of nonprofits and corporations, Points of Light engages five million volunteers in 20 million hours of service each year. We bring the power of people where it's needed most.

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