What are Illinois Extension policies for volunteer background screening?

Background screening is a requirement to provide liability insurance coverage as part of Illinois Extension's risk management plan and includes the following processes and checks:

- Completed Illinois Extension volunteer application with three references
- Interviews
- Reference checks
- National background check by Sterling Volunteers
- Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) check through DCFS
- Registered sex offender check
- Driver authorization for adult volunteers (ages 21 and above) who will be required to drive as part of their volunteer role
- Volunteer rescreening

Screening Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process or Check</th>
<th>New Volunteers</th>
<th>Annually</th>
<th>Every 5 Years</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extension volunteer application</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three reference checks</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Extension child protection training</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered sex offender check</td>
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<td>Extension Volunteer Code of Conduct (signed)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Volunteer Agreement (signed)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background screening through Sterling Volunteers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) check through DCFS</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Extension Participant/Volunteer Agreement to assume risks and fully release all claims</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Driver authorization for those who will be driving as part of their volunteer role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional requirements may be needed per Extension program</td>
<td>X</td>
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What is Sterling Volunteers?
- University of Illinois Extension has partnered with Sterling Volunteers as a volunteer background screening provider.
- Sterling Volunteers offers volunteer screening services to nonprofits and volunteer programs across the country. Learn more at: www.sterlingvolunteers.com/about/

When should a volunteer be screened through Sterling Volunteers?
- See Extension policies and requirements.
- All new volunteers must be screened through Sterling Volunteers.
- All current volunteers must be rescreened every five years.

Why does Extension use Sterling Volunteers?
- Sterling Volunteers provides a secure online volunteer screening platform that allows the volunteer to enter and control their information when ordering a background check.
- A background check is completed online within 24 to 48 hours (about two days).
- Verified volunteers may use their completed background check to apply for additional volunteer positions with other volunteer organizations within and outside the Sterling Volunteers community.
- More than 5,000 organizations trust Sterling Volunteers, including Girl Scouts, CASA, and Catholic Charities.

Is a Social Security number required for the background check through Sterling Volunteers?
- Yes. A Social Security number is required for all background checks.
- Should a volunteer not have a Social Security number, please contact your local Extension office.

Why am I being asked for my Social Security number when other similar organizations do not require this?
- A Social Security number is a unique reference number that helps verify if an individual has a similar name.
- A Social Security number is used to check seven years of address history, and an in-depth criminal search is conducted in each of those jurisdictions.
- A review of land-grant universities and other organizations has shown that indeed Social Security numbers are being collected as part of background screening processes.

Is my personal information secure?
- The Sterling Volunteers platform is extremely secure.
- Sterling Volunteers complies with all national and local regulations regarding storage and transmission of sensitive data and is hosted in ISO 27001 audited data centers.
- The Sterling Volunteers platform is audited regularly throughout the year with external vendors.
- Personal information is encrypted when it sits in Sterling Volunteers systems and transits between systems.
- They use firewalls, data loss prevention tools, and other barriers and alerts to watch out for hackers, viruses, and other threats.
- They do their best to reduce the amount of information they process and transfer to the bare minimum.
- They collect and communicate personal information outside of Sterling through secure channels whenever possible.
Does Illinois Extension require fingerprinting?
• No. Fingerprinting is not required by Illinois Extension.

Does Sterling Volunteers run a credit or any other checks as part of background screening?
• No. Illinois Extension does not conduct credit checks for any volunteers.
• Illinois Extension only contracts with Sterling Volunteers to collect criminal background checks.
• Sterling Volunteers is governed by the Fair Credit Report Act (FCRA) and mandated to include this language in their screening information.
• Illinois Extension is unable to remove this language as it is required by law for Sterling Volunteers to include.

Is there a fee involved for a background screening?
• No. Illinois Extension does not charge for background screenings.
• We are unable to change or delete any preset language in the Sterling Volunteers system.
• A candidate can bypass the payment screen.

How does this process work?
• An e-mail invitation will be sent from Sterling Volunteers on behalf of University of Illinois Extension.
• Please check your spam or junk mail if you have not received the invitation.
• Click the link in the e-mail to begin your background screening.
• You will be asked to create a username and password to log into the Sterling Volunteers system.
• Please contact your local Extension office with any questions regarding your background screening invitation.