

Important Update - Background Check Options

August 2022

We have received numerous questions from volunteers who indicate that they have had a recent background check. We do require that volunteers either utilize the Sterling Platform (all Tier 2 volunteers) or the CJIS Platform (all Tier 3 volunteers). We do this to ensure that all volunteers are screened for the same credentials in the background check process. We require a clear chain of custody regarding the results to ensure confidentiality.

We have learned that there are options for recently conducted background checks for each platform. Here are the processes for each.

Sterling Volunteers

If a volunteer has had a background check conducted by ***Sterling Volunteers for another organization within the last three years***, he or she may request to have that background check sent to UME by Sterling Volunteers. Volunteers should reach out to Taylor Garrett tgarret1@umd.edu to inquire about the process.

CJIS Background Checks

If a volunteer has had a background check conducted by ***CJIS for another organization within the last year***, he or she may complete a 365 Day CJIS form to request the information be sent to UME. Volunteers should reach out to Taylor Garrett tgarret1@umd.edu for that form and instructions.

Episodic Volunteers

Episodic Volunteers are those who volunteer for less than 2 months in a given year. Often, they are individuals who may assist at a Research and Education Center during the growing/harvesting season. Others may be individuals who volunteer at summer fairs. Anyone serving as an Episodic Volunteer must be onboarded according to the [UME Episodic Volunteers](#) document. Example: If someone is volunteering for the fair and is not a fair board volunteer, then he or she must complete the Episodic Volunteer process or be a Certified UME Volunteer, which includes a Tier 1 Volunteer Background Check.

How to process a Tier 1 Volunteer Background Check:

- Names and emails of Episodic Volunteers must be sent to Taylor Garrett tgarret1@umd.edu. She will contact the potential volunteer with a short form requesting information so that she is able to conduct a search of the National Sex Offender Registry and the Maryland Case Search databases.
- Names and emails must be provided to Taylor 30 to 60 days before the volunteer engagement begins.
- FOR 4-H EPISODIC VOLUNTEERS- Use the Episodic Volunteer Custom Report in 4-H Online. This is a part of the [Episodic Volunteers in 4-H Online](#) process and will confirm their enrollment in 4-H Online for Taylor to assure she can begin the background check process.

FAQs (next page)

FAQs

Q. Why does the local 4-H Program have to submit Episodic Volunteers for volunteer background checks when they don't have to submit for Tier 2 or Tier 3 volunteer background checks?

A. An Episodic Volunteer's background check is to be completed within 30-60 days before their volunteer engagement begins, but their enrollment in 4-H Online may come in earlier. Since the local program is better aware of their dates of service, they are better suited to manage Tier 1 background checks for Episodic Volunteers which was the process created in 2021 in collaboration with field faculty and staff.

Q. What do I do if a volunteer needs accommodation for the Volunteer Background Check process?

A. Any volunteer or potential volunteer that needs an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accommodation with regard to the volunteer background check process should notify their local program coordinator. Faculty and staff should then reach out to Aly Valentine valenta@umd.edu, Assistant Director of Operations, for guidance.