



ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: SCREENING

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WHY SCREEN?

A PROGRAM SHOULD PROVIDE *DUE DILIGENCE*—TAKING ANY REASONABLE AND NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THE CORRECT COURSE OF ACTION IS OFFERED OR TAKEN—IN ITS SCREENING PROCESS.

SCREENING PRINCIPLES

- Look for ways to “screen in” as much as “screen out”
- Organizations have the legal right to accept, reject, or terminate potential participants
 - **There are no limitations on what information you can ask from volunteers; there may be limitations on who can view and how to store information**
- Every candidate must go through the same process, regardless of who referred them or their standing in the community

STANDARD 2: SCREENING MENTORS

B.2.1* Program has *established criteria for accepting mentors* into the program as well as criteria for disqualifying mentor applicants.

B.2.2 *Prospective mentors complete a written application* that includes questions designed to help assess their safety and suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.3 Program *conducts at least one face-to-face interview* with each prospective mentor that includes questions designed to help the program assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.4 Program *conducts a comprehensive criminal background check* on prospective adult mentors, including searching a national criminal records database, along with sex offender and child abuse registries and, when relevant, driving records.

STANDARD 2: SCREENING MENTORS

B.2.5 Program conducts reference check interviews with multiple adults who know an applicant (ideally, both personal and professional references) that include questions to help assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.6* Prospective mentors agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or a minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

B.2.7* Prospective mentors agree in writing to participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentees that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by their mentoring program.

STANDARD 2: SCREENING MENTEES

B.2.8* Program has *established criteria for accepting youth* into the program as well as criteria that would disqualify a potential youth participant.

B.2.9 *Parent(s)/guardian(s) complete an application or referral form.*

B.2.10 Parent(s)/guardian(s) provide informed permission for their child to participate.

B.2.11* Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or the minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

STANDARD 2: SCREENING MENTEES

B.2.12 Parents(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing that mentees participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentors that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by the mentoring program.

EFFECTIVE SCREENING REDUCES RISK

- Identifying those who would create an un-acceptable risk given unsupervised access to youth
- Preventing placement of individuals who lack time, judgment or necessary skills and attitudes
- Reducing liability exposure
- Ruling out potentially dangerous individuals with a history of violent or exploitative behavior

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UNSAFE APPLICANTS ARE WONDERING...

- What is the agency's screening process?
- What are the demographics of children served?
- How many staff members are dedicated to monitoring the match?
- How often do program staff contact mentors?
- When will monitoring end?
- Do I really need to meet with my mentee every week?

THE SCREENING PROCESS

Step 1: Orientation Session

Step 2: Application Packet

Step 3: Formal Interview and Reference Checks

Step 4: Criminal History Record Checks

**FBI check highly recommended*

Step 5: Interpreting the Results of Record Checks

Step 6: Additional Screening Mechanisms

Step 7: Pre-Match Training and Moving Toward the Match

Step 8: Match Supervision

TYPES OF CHECKS

- State criminal records
- + National criminal records
- * Fingerprint-based FBI background check
- + Sex Offender Registries
- + Child Abuse Registries
- + Driving records (when relevant)

Key

- Less rigorous, not recommended
- + Required Benchmark
- * Highly recommended Enhancement

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PERMANENT DISQUALIFIERS

- History of abuse of children, sexual or otherwise
- Conviction of any other crime in which children were involved
- History of extreme violence or sexually exploitative behavior
- Termination from a paid or volunteer position cause by misconduct with a child

