



## **Volunteer WSP WATCH Background Check Policy**

### **General information**

The NOAH Center is committed to ensuring that its programs are supported by qualified volunteers and that its community is as safe as possible. The NOAH Center is also committed to taking meaningful actions to protect its finances, property, and other assets. This policy sets forth The NOAH Center's procedures for conducting Washington State Patrol "Washington Access to Criminal History" Background Checks on all volunteers. This process was instated January 1, 2015 to protect the animals, staff, visitors and volunteers at NOAH.

### **Background Checks and Discrimination**

Information discovered through the background check process will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating an individual's suitability as a volunteer. It will not be used to discriminate against a volunteer candidate on the basis of race, color, religion/creed, sex/gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, national origin, genetic information, marital/familial status, disability, military, or veteran status.

### **Consent to Conduct Background Checks and Confidentiality**

All volunteers are subject to completion of background checks with results acceptable to The NOAH Center. Prior to conducting the background check, a signed, written consent will be obtained from the volunteer candidate. Refusal by the volunteer candidate to authorize the background check will make him/her ineligible to volunteer. The information obtained through background checks is confidential and will be shared only with individuals with an essential business need to know. Records of the background check will be maintained in the Volunteer Coordinator's office in a file that is separate from the volunteer's general file.

### **Shelter Policy on WSP WATCH Background Checks**

Acceptance into The NOAH Center's Volunteer Program is contingent upon the successful completion of a background check. Volunteer candidates are not eligible to start trainings, volunteer shifts, or any NOAH related events until The NOAH Center has received and reviewed the results of the background checks. Any exceptions made must be approved by the Executive Director.

### **Performance & Evaluation of Background Checks**

The Volunteer Coordinator will use the WSP WATCH System to conduct all volunteer background checks. Information provided by the volunteer candidate will be submitted within 72 hours of receiving the signed consent. Once the background checks are completed, The NOAH Center will make a decision based upon the information gathered.

1. Volunteer candidates receiving a clean report will be notified with an acceptance letter via email. This email will also contain the date and time scheduled to attend the Safety Orientation Class.
2. If negative information is obtained through the background check process, The NOAH Center will determine if an individual is accepted into our volunteer program based on the following criteria:
  - a. Felony Convictions: Any volunteer candidate with a felony conviction will be disqualified from volunteering.
  - b. Misdemeanor Convictions (Within 5 years): Any volunteer candidate with a misdemeanor conviction within the past 5 years for domestic violence, any violence or abuse against people and/or animals, theft, weapons or drug charges, will immediately be disqualified from

volunteering. All other misdemeanor convictions must be approved on a case by case basis by the Volunteer Director and the Executive Director.

- c. Misdemeanor Convictions (Over 5 Years): All other misdemeanor convictions that are five years or older must be approved on a case by case basis by the Volunteer Director and the Executive Director.

**Adverse Action Taken Due to Background Check Results**

If adverse action is probable based in whole or in part on the results of a background check, the volunteer candidate will be notified within 72 hours and will receive a copy of the background check report. Volunteer candidates will be permitted to provide responsive information regarding their criminal history, including evidence that they did not commit the offense (in the case of a misidentification), evidence of rehabilitation or character, the length of time since the last criminal conviction, and other extenuating circumstances. Volunteer candidates will be given five (5) business days to provide this information. Extensions may be provided at the sole discretion of The NOAH Center.

**Exceptions to the Background Check Policy**

Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of The NOAH Center through the Executive Director or his/her designee. This policy is intended as a guideline to assist in the recruitment of volunteers of The NOAH Center. This policy does not create a contract, express or implied, with any volunteer. The NOAH Center reserves the right to modify this policy in whole or in part, at any time, in its sole discretion.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK**

*(Please read and sign this form in the space provided below.*

*Your written authorization is necessary for completion of the volunteer application process.)*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize The NOAH Center and its designated agents to investigate my background for purposes of evaluating whether I am qualified to volunteer for the organization. I understand that The NOAH Center will utilize the Washington State Patrol WATCH system to assist in checking such information. I specifically authorize such an investigation by this service. I also understand that I may withhold my permission and that in such a case, no investigation will be done, and I will no longer be eligible to volunteer for The NOAH Center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Name – Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date