Your Volunteers Want to Give Back — Let Them

Volunteer Self-Pay: How to Broach the Subject

Many organizations think volunteer screening is too expensive.

It's true – background checks can be a major line item for an organization that already has to stretch inadequate funding across many programs. But volunteer screening is necessary. If you are reading this, you likely know that.

So, what to do?

Here's an idea that you've likely considered but have decided against for one reason or another: have your volunteers pay for their own background checks. You might think that asking these individuals to actually pay to work for you for free will send them running. But you'd be surprised how many volunteers will elect to pay for all of part of their background checks when given the option.

In fact, in 2016, over 50% of the costs of background checks on the Verified Volunteers platform were paid for by volunteers.

Yes, it's true. Volunteers are working with your organization for a reason.

They want to help out just as much as you do. They are willing to do it for free. When all is said and done, many volunteers feel good about shelling out a little extra money if it means that they are helping a cause they truly care about. After all, 8 in 10 volunteers donate to charity according to the Corporation for National and Community Service.*

* www.nationalservice.gov

Still Feel Uncomfortable Asking Volunteers to Pay?

Here are some suggestions:

These are a few simple but effective tips to promote volunteer self-pay or donations towards volunteer background screening. Don't be nervous about asking for donations – the numbers show that a large percentage of volunteers have no issue contributing to the cost of their background check. You don't have much to lose; in fact, our data suggests organizations are forging stronger relationships with many of their volunteers in the process.

Suggestion 1: Make a connection.

Some volunteers serve to complete a requirement – whether a community service requirement or parental duty at a school. In this case, do they truly care about the work they are doing? Maybe not, but you can help them understand your organization, its goals, and its outcomes. Convince them that your cause is worthy of their time, attention, and perhaps a little of their money. Collect their contact information and utilize email campaigns to keep them up to date on your activities. Ask them to follow you on social media.Volunteers that care about your organization are more likely to cover the cost of their background checks. And organizations are telling us that those volunteers who cover the cost of their checks are more dedicated and stay with them longer.

Suggestion 2: Make it an option!

Consider your payment options. Instead of requiring volunteers to pay for the full cost of their background checks, you might think about requiring them to pay for just part of the cost of their check. Or don't require them to pay for anything at all, but give them the option to contribute.

In 2016, nearly 85% of organizations using the Verified Volunteers volunteer screening platform gave their volunteers the option to split the cost of their background checks with them. Almost 40% of those volunteers obliged, paying for all or part of their check. In fact, the volunteers covered, on average, 97.5% of the cost of their checks!

Suggestion 3: Be transparent.

Make sure your website and any communications you send to volunteers include language that appeals to your volunteers' sense of service and the cause they are serving. You are not out for your volunteers' money, but any contribution they can make would go a long way for your organization - to cover the cost of supplies, overhead, or whatever, and get you closer to achieving your mission. Be upfront and honest; they will appreciate it.

About Us

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, one of the world's largest background screening companies, and partnered with Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. **Visit www.verifiedvolunteers.com.**