

## CASE STUDY

# Minds Matter

### Organization Background

Founded in 1991, Minds Matter is a comprehensive three-year tutoring and mentoring program that transforms the lives of accomplished students from low-income families by broadening their dreams and preparing them for college success. Minds Matter achieves a 100% acceptance rate for its students at quality four-year institutions across the country. It has 12 chapters in major urban areas nationwide and continues to grow. With only seven full-time staff members, the organization is entirely dependent on its 1,900 volunteers.

### Background

When Jade Keena, Director of Operations in Minds Matter's national office, joined the organization in late 2014, it was still processing volunteer background checks by hand and on paper. Although a formal background screening policy at the chapter and national levels did exist, what was done was often piecemeal and inconsistent. Even when the organization switched to a digital solution, it took more than 10 minutes to input a volunteer and his/her Social Security Number.

### Solution

When Minds Matter National selected Sterling Volunteers, it added criminal record checks at the county level to its background checks for the first time, greatly improving background check accuracy. Costs did increase for the organization – often due to the fees charged by individual counties – but were the lowest of available providers when comparing apples to apples. National staff were trained, and switched to the Sterling Volunteers online platform seamlessly.

### Results

Thanks to the Sterling Volunteers online platform, Minds Matter staff has seen a huge shift in the time required to request and process volunteer background checks. According to Keena, they can now process dozens of volunteer applications in the time it used to take to process just one. Best of all, they've seen their volunteers taking on some or all of the cost of their background checks, helping to preserve the organization's strict budget.



### Key Highlight

Minds Matter has been able to offset approximately 27% of the cost of its background screening program by allowing its volunteers to pay for some or all of their background checks.



*Sterling Volunteers really understands the needs of nonprofits and they work with you to do it right. Even with our small staff and huge volunteer population, they made the background check process really easy for us."*

**- Jade Keena,  
Director of Operations,  
Minds Matter National**