



Reviewing Volunteer Central Criminal History Reports

Criminal history record checks are a component of the Volunteer Screening Process (VSP) for both Silver and Gold level volunteers. MSU Extension staff who screen volunteers are expected to review criminal history reports in Volunteer Central. Staff should expect to see one of two results: a clear criminal history where there are no crimes found or an indication that a crime is present in the individual's criminal history.

A criminal history record does not automatically exclude an applicant from volunteering; one must consider the nature of the crime and when it took place. Patterns of criminal activity and discrepancies between the application and the criminal history report are also important factors to identify. Whenever there is a question related to a criminal history report, staff are asked to communicate with their supervisor and when additional support is needed, a [VEST member](#) prior to the interview.

REVIEWING THE NATIONAL BACKGROUND CHECK

The national background check is first triggered when an applicant applies in Volunteer Central. The applicant data is sent to backgroundchecks.com and a report is typically sent back to Volunteer Central in less than an hour. When logged into eCoordinator, a staff member can open a volunteer profile and see the completed report under the Screening tab. Staff will determine if the report is Green, Yellow or Red based on the criteria below and apply the appropriate color in Volunteer Central.

REVIEWING ICHAT (MICHIGAN CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK)

Typically, ICHAT will be manually checked by statewide support staff who support the VSP process. If staff are in need of an immediate check, they can conduct the ICHAT review locally. If there are no charges associated with the applicant in ICHAT, the person reviewing the report will select Green in the appropriate area of the Screening tab. If there are charges, the criteria below will be utilized to determine the color.

When a criminal history exists, a copy of the ICHAT record must be uploaded into Volunteer Central using the Attachments tab and a note should be added to the Notes and History tab indicating: Attachment: A copy of the ICHAT report has been uploaded to Attachments. Do not select the option to share the attachment with the volunteer applicant. If you proceed to an interview, print a copy of the report to share with the applicant.

When there is a charge on record, you will see information in three segment areas.

- The arrest segment, which provides information about the arrest.
- The charge segment, which is provided by the prosecutor for the case. These are the charge(s) brought before the court and can be different from the arrest charges.
- The judicial segment is provided by the court and provides the applicant's actual conviction(s) and sentence.

The charge may change over the three segments, based on a variety of factors. Looking at all three helps to understand the whole story and can be useful to see if an applicant's explanation is truthful. However, any Red or Yellow charges, regardless of which segment they appear in, should result in the applicant receiving at least a Yellow coding so that the matter can be discussed further in an interview.

MIPSOR (MICHIGAN PUBLIC SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY):

A national name-based sex offender registry check is triggered at application and conducted at the time of the annual criminal history check. Local MSU Extension staff who manage volunteers are responsible for conducting an address-based MIPSOR check every six months after a national check is conducted or as soon as it is known the individual will be hosting a meeting or event at their home. If there is a record of a sex offender living at the same residence of the volunteer, staff should reach out to VEST for support in putting a restriction on the volunteer's file indicating they cannot host MSU related activities at the home.



WHAT DO THE COLORS MEAN?

The following guidelines are meant to assist staff in reviewing reports. Whenever there is a question, such as a specific charge not listed below or concerns for other reasons, staff should consult with a supervisor and if needed, engage a VEST member.

Green means go.

The applicant's criminal history report had either NO criminal history or only the following results:

- Moving violation not included under the yellow definition below.
- One misdemeanor not reflected on the yellow list below or of concern to the volunteer coordinator; applicant must have acknowledged the charge in the application.
 - Example: Applicant has a charge for disturbing the peace four years ago. Applicant disclosed this in the application and notes that she hosted a loud party and received a citation.
- Minor criminal charges ten or more years ago with no pattern of concern and explanation provided in the application.
 - Example: A 45 year-old applicant has a minor in possession charge and a public intoxication charge from 25 years ago. There are no other charges. The applicant acknowledged the charges in the application.

Yellow means caution.

More information is needed to make the right decision. Seek support from your supervisor and, when needed, a VEST member prior to the interview. Charges or factors that should result in a Yellow rating include:

- Social Security Number discrepancy.
- Any lack of or incorrect data provided on the application.
- Applicant states there is no criminal history on the application, but a charge(s) is found.
- Charges involving finances.
- Two or more moving violations in past 12 months.
- Citation of blood alcohol level content in past 12 months.
- No motor vehicle license.
- Reckless driving.
- Operating vehicle while license was suspended in the past seven years.
- Operating a vehicle while visibly impaired, under the influence, or intoxicated in the last seven years.
- Misdemeanor offense categorized as "crimes against the person."
- Misdemeanor offense categorized as "crimes against property" in the past seven years.
- Misdemeanor offense categorized as "crimes against public safety or public order."
- A lengthy history or pattern of misdemeanors.
- Cruelty to animals conviction more than 10 years ago.
- Crime involving controlled substances more than seven years ago.
- Felony conviction more than seven years ago.
- Other charges not listed here that cause concern.



Red means stop.

This person cannot be accepted as a volunteer. Seek support from your supervisor and VEST. Do not conduct an interview.

- Felony within the last seven years.
- Felony that includes element of violence, regardless of time.
- Listed on national and state sex offender registry.
- NOTE: There a small number of offenses that may appear on the registry that can be considered; VEST will assist in reviewing the charges so please contact a member of the team.
- Crime involving controlled substances within the last seven years (not paraphernalia or alcohol).
- Cruelty to animals conviction within 10 years.
- Any criminal offense which causes harm to a child, regardless of time.
- Any criminal offense which caused harm to a vulnerable population, regardless of time.

On rare occasions, criminal databases have incorrect records linked to an individual. Applicants have the right to review the information obtained through criminal history record checks. If an applicant or volunteer claims that the record is inaccurate, a VEST member can assist in providing the applicant with instructions to dispute a record.