

Volunteer Screening Policy

Purpose:

To ensure volunteers and staff are aware of the consistent screening process for all volunteers and that volunteers are able to apply to roles at MY MS FAMILY and expect a screening, interview and selection process that is fair, reasonable and accommodating.

Policy Statement: MY MS FAMILY will screen and select candidates based on requirements determined through an assessment of risks. Interviews and requirement requests will be conducted in a manner that reflects the labour and human rights legislation in Ontario. The screening process will take reasonable precautions – based on risks assessed in each volunteer role – to ensure volunteers selected can meet the requirements of the role in a fair and equitable manner.

Definitions: “Screening” refers to the entire process of volunteers applying to, interviewing with and being selected by MY MS FAMILY. Recruitment, selection, interviewing, application, reference checking and candidate follow-ups are all included in this process. “Human rights legislation” refers to the Ontario Human Rights Code, which protects Ontarians from discrimination in all its forms. “References” refer to individuals that may be contacted – with the consent of potential volunteers – to confirm identity, activity and previous engagements by the staff member recruiting volunteers.

Responsibilities:

Volunteer Responsibilities Volunteer candidates will complete Application Forms and demonstrate that they meet Application Requirements honestly and to the best of their ability. Volunteer candidates will provide references if required for the role and complete any orientation and training necessary to ensure they are prepared for the role.

Board Member Responsibilities Volunteer board member will conduct a risk assessment for all volunteer roles to determine the screening requirements. These requirements should be linked directly to the risk (such as vulnerable sector checks for volunteers working with vulnerable clients) and should be focused on the role, not the potential individual filling the role.

It is the responsibility of senior management to determine a standardized application form and process (see: Procedures) that will be updated yearly and followed by all potential volunteers.

It is the responsibility of the board member recruiting volunteers to develop appropriate interview questions for phone and/or in-person interviews (whichever is necessary). Requesting references and other requirements will be based on the requirements determined by the risk assessment. If references are requested, they must be contacted.

It is the responsibility of any party involved in the screening process (accepting applications, interviewing candidates, following-up on requirements) to make a determination on whether potential volunteers may be unfit based on the specific requirements expected of them.

Failure to follow this policy and the screening procedure prescribed herein will result in inconsistent volunteer recruitment and selection and a dilution of MY MS FAMILY mission in recruiting volunteers. BOARD members will be reminded of the policy and given additional assistance in volunteer screening if requested to comply to this policy.

Feedback from volunteers will be collected after the beginning of their engagement to assess the efficacy of the screening process.

Procedures: All candidates will:

- Be made aware of the screening process
- Fill out an Application Form or follow Application Requirements from postings on the MY MS FAMILY website
- Submit additional requirements (such as resumes & cover letters, if required) based on their relevance to the role and as determined by the risk assessment
- Be interviewed in a single- or multi-phase process by one or more staff
- Submit personal and/or professional references if required for the purposes of selection
- Attend orientation & training if selected for the volunteer role All Board members recruiting volunteers will:
 - Post application information (Form/Requirements) on the MY MS FAMILY website, along with any additional requirements for the role as determined by the risk assessment
 - Interview candidates who best meet the requirements of the role via phone and/or inperson
 - Contact references if required for the purposes of selection
 - Decline candidates who had been selected for interviews that do not meet the requirements of the role
 - Prepare or provide orientation & training for new volunteers that are selected, where applicable

The screening policy and procedure is in accordance with MY MS FAMILY statement of diversity and anti-discrimination policy. Every effort will be made to select volunteers, including Board of Director members, who represent the diverse community served by MY MS FAMILY.

Application:

All Application Forms/requirements listed in postings will ask for:

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Commitment length (if relevant)

Answers to application questions, if necessary

- An explanation of why volunteers would be a good fit/are interested in role (in lieu of cover letter)

Applications will be sent by e-mail, physical mail or in-person to the posting staff person or any other address provided in the posting

Additional Requirements:

Volunteer role requirements can include:

- Samples – writing, design, past experience, etc.
- Resumé/CV – information about past work, volunteer and/or academic experience
- Cover Letter – more robust explanation of someone’s purpose in the application
- References – cannot be contacted without volunteer consent and not until the end of the process

To request police reference checks and vulnerable sector screenings, the following criteria must be met

- There is a bona fide reason to request this check – examples include working with vulnerable clients (seniors, youth, and people with disabilities), handling money, driving, or certain unsupervised programs
- The check is not requested until the final round of the screening process (after interviews) to ensure the candidate is a right fit for the
- Any information found on the check that is not relevant to the role or its requirements will be disregarded and have no impact on decision making.

Interview Development: of interview questions, and the interview process, should be as follows:

- Interview questions are developed to discover the presence of skills, competencies and experience (where applicable) of candidates for the specific role, related to the duties, responsibilities and activities of that
- Questions are applicable to all volunteers being interviewed for the same role, with accommodations made as necessary
- Detailed records are kept on file of each interview, including notes of comments made by volunteer candidates and interviewer concerns; this record is available to volunteers at any time Board members recruiting volunteers may opt for a phone/video interview first, or on its own, if the information and format will be applicable to the role.

References:

References may be requested at any time, but consent must be provided from candidates when references will be contacted. This means references must be requested after the candidate has begun the screening process, and not at the beginning. **Do not contact references until the final stage of the screening process – when you have decided on the candidate you wish to recruit or you are between 2-3 candidates for the role.** Notes of the comments from reference conversations will be kept in the volunteer file, with contact information kept confidential.

MY MS FAMILY recommends the use of the following as acceptable references:

- At least one person who has served in a supervisory capacity with the volunteer in unpaid settings
- At least one person who knows the volunteer personally and can vouch for their experience as listed
- Additional references based on the level of risk in the role
- Partners, spouses, family members and medical professionals of the volunteer may not be used as references

Next Steps:

Determine the timeline for the screening process if a second or third interview will be required. Any additional requests from volunteers should be equitable to all candidates of that stage in the screening process, such as police reference checks or samples.

Declining Volunteer Candidates: If a volunteer does not complete the screening process, supply the requested requirements, show evidence of ability to fulfill the duties of the role, and/or indicates behaviour not in line with the Human Rights & Anti-Discrimination Policy and Workplace Violence & Harassment Policy, they will be declined for the role. A supervisor must also not rely on personal preference or opinion to decline a volunteer. Declined candidates are also entitled to a reason for this decision if they request it, based on the criteria of the role. Declined candidates are encouraged to contact MY MS FAMILY Referral Counselors for assistance in finding potential roles at other organizations

BOARD MEMBER SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____