

Background History Checks for Volunteers

In 2008, [OAR 580-023](#) was adopted. This statute governs Criminal Background Checks for agents of the Oregon University System, including faculty, staff and volunteers working on behalf of Oregon State University as part of the OSU Extension Master Gardener Program.

Beginning in 2009, OSU adopted the statute instituted mandatory criminal records checks on all persons who are in a critical or security-sensitive position. These positions includes those jobs listed in (a) - (g), below.

- (a) Has direct access to persons under 18 years of age or to student residence facilities because the person's work duties require the person to be present in the residence facility;
- (b) Is providing information technology services and has control over, or access to, information technology systems that would allow the person to harm the information technology systems or the information contained in the systems;
- (c) Has access to information, the disclosure of which is prohibited by state or federal laws, rules or regulations or information that is defined as confidential under state or federal laws, rules or regulations;
- (d) Has access to property where chemicals, hazardous materials and other items controlled by state or federal laws or regulations are located;
- (e) Has access to laboratories, nuclear facilities or utility plants to which access is restricted in order to protect the health or safety of the public
- (f) Has fiscal, financial aid, payroll or purchasing responsibilities as one of the person's primary responsibilities; or
- (g) Has access to personal information about employees or members of the public including Social Security numbers, dates of birth, driver license numbers, medical information, personal financial information or criminal background information.

Master Gardener volunteers are most likely to qualify as being in a critical or security-sensitive position if they work with youth (a) or if they drive on behalf of the University, as part of their volunteer assignment.

None of our volunteers has fiscal or financial responsibilities as their primary duties (f). Nor should our volunteers have access to social security numbers, dates of birth, drivers license numbers, etc. of faculty, staff, fellow volunteers or clients (g).

Those volunteers that also serve as their OMGA chapter treasurer or the OMGA treasurer have fiscal and financial responsibilities for the OMGA, and not for OSU Extension. Similarly, those volunteers that handle money for plant sales are doing so for the Association, and not for Extension. Thus, category 'f' does not apply in these cases.

All volunteers who will work with youth or who drive on behalf of the University, as part of their work as an OSU Extension Master Gardener, are thus required to undergo a volunteer background

check. Volunteers are assigned these tasks (e.g. working with youth or driving on behalf of OSU) if they have these tasks checked off of their Volunteer Position Description.

The University Policy on Background history checks may be found at:

- <http://oregonstate.edu/admin/hr/ercc/criminal-history-checks>

Extension Service volunteers should complete and return the form to their county Extension office in a sealed envelope. Somewhere on the envelope, volunteers should indicate the county to which they are applying. The sealed envelope will be forwarded directly to the OSU Office of Human Resources for processing. A representative from OSU HR will contact (usually by phone) a designated person within the county Extension office who is authorized to receive the results of the background history check. Please check with your county Extension office manager to find out who the designated person is within your office, or to see if you can be placed on the list of people who are authorized to receive the results of volunteers' background history checks.