



UW-Extension Criminal Background Check For Staff Use

Frequently Asked Questions - February 2016

The safety of all youth and adults is our top priority. To ensure volunteers are qualified, understand and prepared for their positions, UW-Extension requires four things of all applicants:

1. Background check - first year and every 4 years after
2. Annually, signing the UW-Extension Volunteer Behavior Expectation form and the Assumption of Risk Document.
3. Face to face Volunteers In Preparation training - once, with ongoing virtual and in person trainings after
4. Complete the UW-Extension Volunteer Mandated Reporter Training online.

BELOW ARE SOME OF THE MORE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: Is this for all volunteers? Why am I being asked to complete this Criminal Background Check (CBC) process?

A1: Yes, the CBC process is required for all UW-Extension employees and volunteers.

"By applying as a UW Extension volunteer, you agree to allow UW-Extension to run a background check – locally, statewide and nationally, this year, every 4 years after, and any other times that cause a concern. In addition, you agree to inform the local office immediately of any changes to your criminal background if something should happen or if anything changes with regard to your status (e.g. , criminal arrest, charge or conviction history, driving privileges, etc.)." – Adult Volunteer Behavior Expectation

Completing the CBC is necessary in order to comply with Regent Policy #20-19 and the UW-Extension Criminal Background Check policy.

Q2. Who is General Information Services (GIS)?

A2. GIS is the vendor contracted by UW-Extension (and other UW institutions) to perform criminal background checks. This is why you enter information into GIS's secure website to complete the check.

Q3. What is included in this criminal background check (CBC)? What is GIS checking?

A3: The check consists of 4 parts:

- Social Security Number (SSN) Trace – authenticates applicant's information and generates a list of addresses the applicant has lived at for the last seven years; as part of the trace, GIS and UW-Extension may verify that the SSN is valid and appropriately assigned to the applicant.
- Criminal Felony/Misdemeanor by County of Residence – superior and municipal court records in any county in the U.S.
- Sex Offender Registry – sex offender search by state.
- National Criminal Background Database – search of GIS's proprietary national criminal background check database.

Q4: Doesn't UW-Extension or my county staff have my Social Security Number (SSN) and the other information they're asking for? Why do I need to provide it again?

A4. No, UW-Extension staff does not collect social security numbers for background checks. In order to complete a national background check it is necessary to use a social security number.

- By asking each volunteer to enter their individual information directly into GIS's secure website, we reduce the flow of your private information, which lessens the risk of exposure and offers the best protection available.

Q5: Is the email from GIS Spam?

A5: No.

- It's always responsible to question messages that request personal information or look like spam.
- Volunteers will first receive an e-mail from Angela Schultz, CBC Coordinator for UW-Extension explaining the checking process and alert you to watch for an e-mail from GIS. Volunteers can contact Angela if they have questions
- Volunteers will then receive an email from GIS containing a link to complete their background check.

Q6: I have been taught repeatedly to never to give out personally identifiable or sensitive information when the request for this information comes via email. I don't want to risk identity theft. Why should I do this now?

A6: You should not give out any personal information via an *unsolicited* email.

- The email from GIS is anticipated and requested by UW-Extension.
- You are right to be concerned about protecting your information.
- We do understand your concerns; this is why each individual email is tailored to a specific recipient and includes first name, last name and email address.
- Your name and email address were entered into GIS's system by Angela Schultz using her secure, private GIS-authorized account.

Q7: Are you sure this GIS website is safe and secure? How do you know?

A7: Yes, the GIS website is secure. Additional information from GIS regarding their privacy protection practices is available here: <http://www.geninfo.com/privacy.asp>. UW-Extension Central IT Services management agrees that the GIS site is safe to use.

Q8: Based on screen 12 of the screen-by-screen reference document I am wondering if, in addition to a criminal background check, my credit report is also being reviewed. Are you going to check my credit?

A8: No, your credit report is not checked. GIS is required to comply with the FCRA-Fair Credit Reporting Act and GIS includes this language in their disclosures and instructions. UW-Extension does not check your credit as a condition of volunteering.

Q9. I will not complete the criminal background check on the GIS website because I don't think it's safe. What can I do?

A9. Please see A7 for information about GIS security. If you refuse to complete the background check on the website, there may be an option for a paper-based process. Please note that the paper copy will be entered by staff in the GIS website. Please contact your county UW-Extension Staff for more information.

Q10. I do not want to complete this criminal background check. Can I still volunteer or work for UW-Extension?

A10. No. UW-Extension is required by policy of the UW Board of Regents to ensure that every employee and volunteer has passed a criminal background check. Anyone not completing the check will not be allowed to work or volunteer for UW-Extension. There are no exceptions.