

Palouse Habitat for Humanity

Criminal Background Check and Sex Offender Registry Check

Policy

Purpose: Palouse Habitat for Humanity recognizes the importance of the personal safety of our volunteers, employees and partner families, and our responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of communities in which we build. We also recognize our role as a Christian ministry to honor the Christian tradition of forgiveness and love of one another. Considering these two important goals, Palouse Habitat for Humanity adopts the following policy:

1. Palouse Habitat For Humanity (Palouse HFH) will conduct online sex offender and criminal background checks on:
 - a. Finalist partner family applicants and any family members over age 16 prior to selection by the board;
 - b. Individual volunteers at the discretion of Palouse HFH based on the nature and duration of the volunteer services;
 - c. Board members and committee members; and
 - d. Employees and contract hires prior to offering the position.
2. The above individuals will be informed that Palouse HFH may conduct these checks as part of their relationship with Palouse HFH, and will be asked to sign a consent form allowing Palouse HFH to conduct the checks.
3. Any person who does not consent to a sex offender and criminal background check will not be permitted to become a partner family, work and/or volunteer with Palouse HFH.
4. Criminal background checks and sex offender registry checks will be conducted by the Executive Director (ED) in conjunction with the Volunteer Coordinator. They will be completed before a partner family passes final selection, before an offer of employment is made, before a board member is selected, and with volunteers at the discretion of the ED based on the nature and duration of their service.
5. The ED will exercise discretion in considering relevant information discovered in the background checks. The ED may choose to consider factors related to the individual situation and, in coordination with the appropriate supervisor, may reassign individuals with a criminal or sex offender record to protect volunteers, employees, partner families, and community members while allowing appropriate participation within Habitat for Humanity.
6. Based on review of the background records, individuals or potential partner families who, in the discretion of the ED, do not pass criminal background checks or sex offender registry checks may be dismissed by the ED, after consultation with a review team as set forth in the practice provisions set forth below. Palouse HFH reserves the right to recheck sex offender status and

criminal history at any time during the homebuilding process, course of employment and/or service.

Criminal Background Check and Sex Offender Registry Check Practice

1. At the request of the ED, the Volunteer Coordinator will check Idaho and Washington sex offender registries and criminal background records for volunteers, partner family finalists, potential board members, potential employees and volunteers. These checks will be conducted on a Palouse HFH computer in the Palouse HFH office.

Sex Offender Databases:

- www.nspor.gov, a free database that provides a central location to search for registered sex offenders in single or multiple states
- Idaho: www.isp.idaho.gov/sor_id.
- Washington: www.icrimewatch.net/index.php?AgencyID=54528

Criminal Background Databases:

- www.uscourts.gov/cmecf for federal felony and misdemeanor information
 - Idaho: www.idcourts.us
 - Washington: www.wsp.wa.gov
2. Volunteer Coordinator will verbally report any findings to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will consider the findings and, in consultation with a review team that includes the Board President and the responsible supervisory Palouse HFH employee or volunteer (i.e., the Surplus Sale Manager for employees and volunteers at the Surplus Sale; Family Selection Committee Chair for partner family applicants, etc.), take appropriate steps to help ensure the safety of Palouse HFH partner families, volunteers, employees and immediate community members. Findings shall be disclosed by the review team only to those Palouse HFH representatives deemed necessary to the review and decision-making process.
 3. When making a determination about suitability for involvement with Palouse HFH, the review team will consider the following:
 - nature, duties and responsibilities of the position;
 - nature of the conviction and whether children were involved;
 - time elapsed since the offense;
 - extent to which the offense may affect the person's fitness or ability to perform the duties or responsibilities of the position;
 - age of the candidate when the illegal activity occurred;
 - number of convictions (if more than one);
 - any information produced by the person or produced on the person's behalf

- demonstrating rehabilitation and good conduct;
 - whether hiring, transferring, promoting or partnering with the applicant and/or candidate would pose risk to the organization;
 - the nature of the build, i.e., proximity of houses, mixed use communities, etc.; and/or
 - any other factor that the affiliate deems relevant to the decision.
5. The review team, at their discretion, may hold a meeting with the individual. Following that meeting, the review team will seek multiple independent sources of information and references (including legal history, personal references, etc.). In a timely manner (not longer than one month), the team will conduct their review and alert the individual as to the team's determination: dismissal, involvement with specifications or conditions, or full involvement with the organization.
6. Palouse HFH reserves the right to weigh disqualification criteria on a case-by-case basis and to make selection decisions in its sole discretion. Disqualification may extend to any partner family member and to any position within Palouse HFH.