

## Background Check Policy

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### I. Policy on Background Checks

Every adult volunteering or working with the ACE Mentor Program of America and its affiliates, regardless of his or her role, must be listed as “active” in the ACE National database. This includes any adult mentor, board member, guest speaker, affiliate leader, school champion, and affiliate staff person.

**Every volunteer/mentor/staff member who has access to the ACE student database and/or spends more than 20% (approximately two meetings) of the program year in the presence of students must have an approved background check, through ACE vendor Sterling Volunteers, which must be renewed EVERY three years.**

At its discretion, an affiliate may elect to require all adults (i.e., board members) involved in the program, regardless of their role, to undergo a background check; but this is **not** a requirement.

**NO volunteer (who meets the background check requirement) should be marked as “active” and be permitted to work with students until he/she has:**

- A complete database registration for the current program year.
- Completed and signed the mentor training (included in registration).
- An approved background check.

**ONLY “ACTIVE” MENTORS ARE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES WITH STUDENTS.**

The ACE Mentor Program of America, Inc. conducts background checks through Sterling Volunteers. **Background checks from other vendors will not be accepted.** Background checks include the following information:

1. Social Security Trace
2. Government Watch List Search (OFAC)
3. 50 State DOJ Sex Offender Registry (Dru Sjodin/NSOPW)
4. Complete Criminal History Locator Search including:
  - Current county/state of residence search
  - Unlimited county/state searches from last 7 years address history (based on SSN trace)
  - Nationwide Database Search with primary source validation
  - Arrest Direct Database Search with primary source validation
5. Unlimited alias/maiden name searches across all of the above (based on SSN trace)
6. Monthly updating of Basic Criminal History Locator Search in the year following initial background check.

## II. Background Check Process

### A. Managing Background Checks

Affiliate database administrators must send background check invitations to all volunteers required to undergo a check. ACE's national office reviews reports from the background check provider and then as appropriate approves background check applications.

The background check invitation process has been made easier through an API between the ACE database and our background check provider, Sterling Volunteers.

Please refer to the [Database Admin Guide](#) for details on managing volunteer background checks.

### B. Renewing and Updating Background Checks

ACE policy requires active volunteers update and renew their background check every three years. The ACE database is programmed so that invitations to volunteers to renew their background check can only be sent after the initial three-year period has expired. Therefore, ACE allows a **30-day grace period** to give sufficient time for a new background check to be processed. Thus, a volunteer whose background check must be renewed during the program year may continue mentoring uninterrupted for 30 days while an updated background check is being processed.

Affiliate database administrators should vigilantly check the weekly report emails from the database, anticipate which volunteers need to re-new their background checks, and plan to re-invite these volunteers immediately after the third anniversary of their initial background check.

Volunteers whose initial background check has not been renewed within the 30-day grace period **MUST** not be permitted to attend any ACE sessions or events until they have successfully passed an updated background check.

**Remember:**

A volunteer (who meets the background check requirement) cannot be marked as “active” until he/she has:

1. A complete database registration for the current program year
2. Completed and signed the mentor training (part of registration)
3. An approved background check through Sterling Volunteers

**C. Sample Email Sent to Mentor/Volunteer After Application Submission**

Dear (First/Last Name),

Thank you for completing your ACE Mentor Registration!

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Your Account Detail:

Email: **volunteer@mentor.com**

Role: **Mentor/Volunteer**

ACE Affiliate Program: **Program Year 2018-2019**

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Your application to become an ACE mentor/volunteer has been received and will be reviewed by your local affiliate program.

The program start date varies for each local ACE affiliate. The local affiliate leader will contact you before the program begins to provide the details needed to get started.



For more info on your local ACE affiliate: <http://acementor.org/affiliates>

**Background Check Requirement:**

All mentors and volunteers who attend 20% or more (more than 2 meetings) of the ACE Mentor Program sessions and/or have access to student/mentor personal info in the ACE database, MUST undergo a criminal background check every three years, using ACE's provider, Sterling Volunteers.

If your role with ACE meets the above conditions, your affiliate leader will send you an email invitation to complete the background check. The email will come from Sterling Volunteers, not ACE. Please complete the background check application as soon as possible as it takes a few days to process.

Once you have been approved, your affiliate leader will notify you that you are eligible to begin mentoring and/or managing the database.

**NOTE:**

Please make sure to check out the "resources" tab in your ACE profile or visit [www.acementortools.org](http://www.acementortools.org) for links to best practices, policies and procedures, lesson plan ideas and much more!

Thank you for your interest in the ACE Mentor Program!

ACE Mentor Program of America, Inc.

### **III. Background Check Costs**

1. Each affiliate will be invoiced for the fees incurred by each background check processed by Sterling Volunteers. Therefore, DO NOT invite a potential mentor/volunteer to complete a background check unless he/she is committed to participating in the local ACE program.
2. The average cost is \$44. Total fees may vary per person and region, based on screening needs and local fees.
3. In the background check application, volunteers are given the option to pay for part or all of their own background check. About 20% do agree to pay at least a portion of the cost. This helps keep costs down for affiliates and helps to ensure volunteer commitment to ACE.