Background Check Policy and Process for Mentors/Volunteers and Affiliate Staff

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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 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, EVERY three years. (new effective July 1, 2015)

An affiliate may elect to require all adults (i.e. board members) involved in the program to undergo a background check.

NO mentor should be marked as “active” until he/she has:
- A complete database record.
- An approved background check.
- Completed the Mentor Training program.
- Signed the Mentor Agreement

ONLY “ACTIVE” MENTORS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES WITH STUDENTS.

The ACE Mentor Program of America, Inc. conducts background checks through Verified Volunteers.
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 Basic Criminal History Locator Search Updating (up to 1 year after)

It is required that all mentors or other volunteers submit to the background check process every three years or sooner if required by a specific school or state.

II. Background Check Process

The ACE Mentor Program National Office reviews and approves background applications from all mentors and other volunteers/staff required to undergo a check. It is the responsibility of each affiliate leader to send a new mentor or other volunteer the link to the background check application.

A. The Process

1. An interested mentor must go to the www.acemento.org website and complete the New Mentor Application Form.

2. The applicant receives an automated confirmation of his or her application to the ACE database (see template attached in Section II-C).

3. The ACE affiliate’s email account receives a notification of the new mentor registration, including contact information (see template attached in Section
**Background Check Policy and Process for Mentors/Volunteers and Affiliate Staff**

II-D). Every affiliate must monitor the affiliate ACE email account! If your affiliate is not currently using it, please contact your regional director.

4. The affiliate leader should load all new mentors into the Verified Volunteer system and send out an invitation requesting them to do a background check.

   *It is very important that affiliate leaders understand their affiliate will be invoiced for the fees each applicant incurs from Verified Volunteers. Therefore, DO NOT give this link out to anyone who is not committed to volunteering with your local ACE affiliate. **Also note that fees vary per person, based on screening needs.*

5. Once the applicant submits his or her application on the Verified Volunteer site, it may take 7-10 business days for the results to be captured and provided to the ACE National Office. Once received, an ACE National staff person will review the results and update the mentor record in the ACE database accordingly.

6. The affiliate leader should periodically check the ACE database or Verified Volunteers for the updated approval of background checks. The mentor chart in the database has a column where the background check status is listed. Once ACE National has updated the applicant’s background status, the affiliate leader needs to update the mentor record status if/when the mentor becomes “active.”

7. **A MENTOR SHOULD NOT BE MARKED ACTIVE UNTIL BACKGROUND CHECK IS APPROVED. ONLY ACTIVE MENTORS SHOULD MEET WITH THE STUDENTS.**

**B. Affiliate Leader’s Instructions for Updating Mentor Status**

1. Visit [www.acementor.org](http://www.acementor.org), and click “ACE Behind the Scenes” which is located at the very bottom of the homepage.
2. Log in to the Affiliate Admin Area by entering your username and password. If you do not remember your username and/or password, please email webmaster@acementor.org.
3. Once logged in, click the link “Enter the ACE Admin Area.”
4. On the left-hand side of the page, click “Access Mentor Records.”
5. Re-enter username and password.
6. Enter the new mentor’s or other volunteer’s name and launch search.
7. Click “View/Edit Details” next to the mentor/volunteer’s name.
8. Click “Details” in the box that includes the status.
9. Scroll to the bottom to find the “Internal” section and make changes.
10. Click “Update” to complete the transaction.

**Remember:**

A mentor cannot be marked as “active” until he/she has:

1. A complete database record.
2. An approved background check.
3. Completed the Mentor Training program.
4. Signed Mentor Agreement.

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

Thank you for submitting your [School Year Here] ACE Mentor Application!

**Steps to Becoming an ACE Mentor:**

Your ACE database application has been submitted and will be reviewed by the local affiliate.

Your local affiliate leader will be in contact with you to outline the details steps to becoming a mentor.

The overview of the steps are:
Completed online application – Done
Approved Background check
Completed mentor agreement
Completed mentor training

As part of the application process, it is **required** that all mentors and volunteers who attend 20% or more (more than 2 meetings) of the ACE Mentor Program sessions and/or has access to database have a criminal background check processed. Mentors will be required to repeat their background check every three years. You will receive instructions on how to process a background check from your affiliate leader.

The steps above are imperative to make sure both mentors and students are protected.

Once you have complete the steps and have been approved, your affiliate leader will update your status from “pending” to “active” and contact you to begin mentoring.

Thank you for your interest in the ACE Mentor Program!

Feel free to login to view your account information.
D. **Sample** Email Sent to Affiliate Leader after Mentor/Volunteer Completes Online Application

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DO NOT REPLY TO THIS E-MAIL*This is an automated e-mail message sent from the support system.

A mentor has submitted an application to participate in your ACE affiliate. Please contact this mentor applicant to provide him or her with the information to process a background check and the steps to becoming an “active” mentor.

For the background check, please be sure to provide the link to Verified Volunteers. Remember that your affiliate will incur a fee for any application processed by Verified Volunteers.(invoiced by the National office).

For sample email and other information on the steps to becoming an “active” mentor, please go to the behind the scenes section of the ACE Mentor website at the link below.

http://www.acementor.org/ace-admin/affiliate-resources/
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III. Background Check Costs

1. Each affiliate will be invoiced for the fees incurred by each background check processed by Verified Volunteers. Therefore, DO NOT distribute the link to a potential mentor/volunteer unless he/she is committed to participating in the local ACE program.

2. Each affiliate will receive a user name and password to be able to go into the Verified Volunteers website. The website is www.verifiedvolunteers.com.

3. The base fee for a background check is $29. Total fees may vary per person, based on screening needs.