

## **Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge Volunteer Credentialing Policy**

It is the mission of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) to provide parks and recreational opportunities for all the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish. With a population of close to half a million people, the BREC staff alone cannot succeed in this mission. BREC needs volunteers not only to be a part of the everyday activities that we offer the community, but also to provide a link between BREC and the rest of the community.

Our vision for promoting a safe, fun, and inclusive environment for recreational and leisure activities has been heightened by feedback from the public that BREC has received about a concern for safety. In light of these things we have created the following policies regarding the credentialing of volunteers.

### ***Background Checks:***

Volunteers will be required to undergo a criminal background check prior to the beginning of the sport, season or activity in which they intend to become involved. These volunteers include but are not limited to coaches, aids, and other individuals spending unsupervised time alone with a vulnerable population (youth, elderly, disabled, etc.) If a volunteer is involved in more than one sport, season or activity, the volunteer will be required to complete a background check consent form before the beginning of each sport, season or activity, and a background check may be conducted at the discretion of the Recreation and Park Commission. Each year all *new* Volunteers will be required to have a background check conducted prior to the beginning of the sport, season or activity in which they intend to become involved. Volunteers who continue to participate will be required to have a background check conducted every two (2) calendar years. In addition, the Recreation and Park Commission reserves the right to conduct random background checks of volunteers at any time prior to or during the sport, season or activity in which the volunteer is involved. Should an approved volunteer subsequently have any criminal charges brought against him/her that are listed in the detailed disqualifications list, during their term of service as a volunteer, they are required to immediately disclose the nature of the charges to the Volunteer Coordinator and they may be disqualified until there is a resolution of the charges.

***All volunteers will be required to sign a written consent form allowing the Recreation and Park Commission to order an individual criminal background check.*** All signed consent forms must be turned in to the Volunteer Coordinator no later than the designated due date. Failure to provide a completed consent form by the deadline will automatically disqualify the volunteer from participation.

### ***Background Screening and Handling of Information***

The Recreation and Park Commission will be responsible for selecting a reporting agency or method to conduct the background checks. The Volunteer Coordinator will administer the process of background checks. ***Any information received as a result of the screening process will be kept confidential and not disclosed to anyone outside BREC.*** The Volunteer

Coordinator is responsible for securing the results of the background checks in a safe and secure location and keeping them for the time period required by law, or six years, whichever is greater.

***If the background check includes any of the listed disqualifications, the BREC Volunteer Coordinator will receive notification from the reporting agency advising that the background check revealed a disqualifying offense. Upon receiving notification, the Volunteer Coordinator will disqualify the individual in accordance with these Policies and, therefore, the individual will not be allowed to volunteer with BREC.*** The individual, who has been disqualified, will receive written notification informing the individual of his/her disqualification and of the method for disputing the results of the background check.

### ***Disqualifying Offenses:***

A person will be disqualified and prohibited from serving as a volunteer for BREC if the person has been found guilty of the following crimes. Guilty means that a person was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea accompanied by a court finding of guilty, regardless of whether there was an adjudication of guilt (conviction) or a withholding of guilt, or the record has been expunged. This policy does not apply if criminal charges resulted in acquittal, Nolle Prose, or dismissal.

1. All sexual offenses, regardless of the amount of time since offense. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure.

2. All felony offenses that constitute crimes against the person, regardless of the amount of time since offense. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated burglary.

3. Any crimes involving children, regardless of the amount of time since the offense.

4. All felony offenses other than those against the person or sexual within the past 10 years.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment.

5. All misdemeanor that constitute offenses against the person within the past 7 years. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run.

6. All misdemeanor drug & alcohol offenses within the past 5 years or multiple offenses in the past 10 years. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia.

7. Any other misdemeanor within the past 5 years that would be considered a potential danger to children or is directly related to the functions of that volunteer.

- Examples include but are not limited to: contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, theft – if person is handling monies.

***Pending cases:***

Anyone who has been charged for any of the disqualifying offenses or for cases pending in court may not be permitted to volunteer until the official adjudication of the case. Should any charges be uncovered or brought against the applicant during his time with BREC, the applicant shall be suspended until such time as the charges have been cleared or dropped and he is reinstated by BREC. The Applicant is required to disclose to the Volunteer Coordinator charges that are brought during his time with BREC.

***Training***

All volunteers must attend and participate in any required training through BREC. The Volunteer Coordinator will advise volunteers of any required training after the volunteer has been approved through the background check process. Failure to complete required training is grounds for removal from service. Additional training may be required as needed to ensure the safety and success of our programs. The Volunteer Coordinator will keep track of all recorded training hours, but it is the responsibility of the volunteer to complete the actual training and therefore keep his or her credentials current with BREC.

***Nonwaiver:***

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as a waiver or limitation of the discretion of BREC to disqualify an applicant for a volunteer position when, in the sole opinion of BREC, such is in the interests of BREC or its program participants.