



NEWTON FOOD PANTRY

## **CREATING A SAFE WORKING AND SHOPPING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL**

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## **CREATING A SAFE WORKING AND SHOPPING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL**

### Introduction:

The Newton Food Pantry (NFP) is committed to the safety and security of all its clients and volunteers.

Since 2015, The NFP has been working on ensuring that there are clear guidelines, policies and procedures to set the standards for the work we do and how we do it. These efforts led to the development of the NFP Volunteer Manual, and the training sessions for all volunteers on protocols and safety procedures.

The goal of the NFP is to offer a safe working and shopping environment, and safe interactions between volunteers and clients. To that effect, the NFP Board adopted revised policy for volunteers on September 4, 2018. The intent of the policy is to update the Pantry's approach to its work with volunteers regarding background checks. NFP Board is implementing Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) screening as a best practice that ensures the organization's commitment towards the wellbeing of those we serve and the volunteer workforce.

The policy adopted by the NFP for the CORI Screening is based on the model provided by the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS).

# **Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Screening Policy**

## **Background Check Policy**

The Newton Food Pantry is an all-volunteer organization. This policy is applicable to the criminal history screening of prospective and current adult volunteers.

In adopting Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) as part of a general background check for volunteer work the following practices and procedures will be followed.

### **CONDUCTING CORI SCREENING**

CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) and MGL c. 6, §. 172, and only after a CORI Acknowledgement Form has been completed.

If a new CORI check is to be made on a volunteer within a year of his/her signing of the CORI Acknowledgement Form, the volunteer shall be given seventy-two (72) hours' notice that a new CORI check will be conducted.

### **ACCESS TO CORI**

All CORI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential, and access to the information must be limited to those individuals who have a "need to know" (i.e. volunteer coordinator and the president of the Pantry). This may include, but not be limited to, hiring managers, staff submitting the CORI requests, and staff charged with processing job applications. The Newton Food Pantry (NFP) will maintain and keep a current list of each individual authorized to have access to, or view, CORI. This list will be updated every six (6) months and is subject to inspection upon request by the DCJIS at any time.

### **CORI TRAINING**

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to review or access CORI at the NFP will review, and will be thoroughly familiar with, the educational and relevant training materials regarding CORI laws and regulations made available by the DCJIS.

## **USE OF CRIMINAL HISTORY IN BACKGROUND SCREENING**

CORI used for employment purposes shall only be accessed for applicants who are otherwise qualified for the position for which they have applied.

Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on background checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.

## **VERIFYING A SUBJECT'S IDENTITY**

If a criminal record is received from the DCJIS, the information is to be closely compared with the information on the CORI Acknowledgement Form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant to ensure the record belongs to the applicant.

If the information in the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, a determination is to be made by an individual authorized to make such determinations based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant.

## **INQUIRING ABOUT CRIMINAL HISTORY**

In connection with any decision regarding volunteer opportunities, the subject shall be provided with a copy of the criminal history record, whether obtained from the DCJIS or from any other source, prior to questioning the subject about his or her criminal history. The source(s) of the criminal history record is also to be disclosed to the subject.

## **DETERMINING SUITABILITY**

If a determination is made, based on the information as provided in section V of this policy, that the criminal record belongs to the subject, and the subject does not dispute the record's accuracy, then the determination of suitability for the position will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. (a) Relevance of the record to the position sought;
2. (b) The nature of the work to be performed;

3. (c) Time since the conviction;
4. (d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;
5. (e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
6. (f) The number of offenses;
7. (g) Whether the applicant has pending charges;
8. (h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof; and
9. (i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the organization.

The applicant is to be notified of the decision and the basis for it in a timely manner.

#### **ADVERSE DECISIONS BASED ON CORI**

If an authorized official is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of a criminal history background check, the applicant will be notified immediately. The subject shall be provided with a copy of the organization's CORI policy and a copy of the criminal history. The source(s) of the criminal history will also be revealed. The subject will then be provided with an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the CORI record. Subjects shall also be provided a copy of DCJIS' *Information Concerning the Process for Correcting a Criminal Record*.

#### **SECONDARY DISSEMINATION LOGS**

All CORI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential and can only be disseminated as authorized by law and regulation. A central secondary dissemination log shall be used to record *any* dissemination of CORI outside this organization, including dissemination at the request of the subject.

## STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS TO BEGIN THE CORI SCREENING PROCESS

### Instructions:

**Step 1-** Please read the enclosed Background Check Policy adopted by the NFP. You may contact Regina Wu with any question or concerns you may have.

**Step 2** –Go to the NFP website and download and complete the CORI Acknowledgement Form. **Do not sign the form.**

**Step 3.** Take the completed CORI Acknowledgement Form to a Notary Public. To have a document notarized, make sure that the document is unsigned and that you bring photo identification such as a valid driver's license.

**Step 4** – Once you have completed, signed, and notarized the CORI Acknowledgement Form, bring it in a sealed envelope or mail it to the NFP. If you mail it, send it to:

Newton Food Pantry  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue,  
Newton, MA 02459

Attention: Regina Wu

**Step 5-** Once the NFP Pantry receives the CORI Acknowledgement Form, it will proceed with the background check, adhering to the Background Check Policy adopted by the NFP and described in the previous pages.

**All CORI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential and can only be disseminated as authorized by law and regulation.** For additional information, please refer to Background Check Policy adopted by the NFP, under “Secondary Dissemination Logs” (page 5)

## **Notary Publics Services in Newton:**

Newton City Hall- Clerk's Office (has a Notary Public)

Free **notary service** is available to members at all **AAA** Northeast offices for most documents requiring **notary public** certification. Members are not charged a fee.

Banks can **notarize** your documents for **free**. If you need to get a document **notarized**, a simple, **free** solution can usually be found at the nearest branch of your bank. The process is typically very simple. Present the document to a **notary** public and sign it in his or her presence.

Some Banks in Newton that provide **notary public services** to customers:

- Bank of America, The Village Bank, Direct Federal Credit Union, DCU, Citizens Bank

### **Some banks even provide notary services to non-account holders.**

You will be happy to know, here at TD Bank, we offer free notary services to anyone, both TD Customers and Non-TD Customers, who needs it at any TD Bank Store during lobby hours. We recommend that you contact your local TD Store before your visit to ensure the Notary Specialists is available at the specific time you are planning to visit. If you'd like, you may contact our Banking Specialists 24/7 at 888-751-9000 and schedule an appointment with a Notary. To find out TD Store locations and hours near you, please visit, <http://bit.ly/TDStores>.

To get a document notarized, we invite you to look here: <http://bit.ly/1is4B8X> for details on what is needed during your visit.

#### **For a fee:**

The UPS Store  
1005 Boylston St.  
Newton Highlands, MA 02461  
(617) 527-8008

The UPS Store  
321 Walnut St.  
Newtonville, MA 02460,  
(617) 527-3122

#### **Middlesex Mobile Notary**

Serving Waltham and the Surrounding Area, Phone number: (781) 929-8129