

**Overview**  
**Pennsylvania Act 15 (formerly Act 153)**  
**Pertaining to Volunteers**  
**Updated with Changes**

**Summary:**

In October 2014, Governor Corbett signed PA Act 153 into law. This legislation is designed to increase the safety of children by requiring background checks and child abuse clearances for all volunteers and staff who are responsible for children. This law impacts all organizations who serve youth and also includes strengthened mandatory reporting requirements for adult volunteers and staff. (On July 2, 2015, Governor Wolf signed PA HB 1276 which made changes to PA Act 153 establishing it as Act 15. Those changes are reflected below and noted with \*\*).

**What is the criteria for clearances?**

Adults who are currently unpaid volunteers, or are applying to be unpaid volunteers with the following responsibilities:

- Unpaid volunteers who provide permanent or temporary care, supervision, training, or control of a child in lieu of a parent. (Are you responsible for more than just your own child)? **OR**
- Unpaid volunteers who have care, supervision, guidance, or control over children and regular and repeated contact that is integral to their volunteer responsibilities.

**What clearances are required?**

Volunteers who meet any of the above criteria must have the following clearances:

- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History **\*\***(After July 25, 2015, there will be no cost to obtain this clearance for non-profit volunteers working with children).
- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Child Abuse Clearance **\*\***(After July 25, 2015, there will be no cost to obtain this clearance for non-profit volunteers working with children).
- FBI fingerprint based Federal Criminal History **\*\***(Cost is \$25.75). **Note: If you have been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the entire past 10 years, you may sign a Minsi Trails Council Disclosure Statement for Volunteers in lieu of the FBI fingerprint based Federal Criminal History. The disclosure form affirms your residency and indicates there are no criminal convictions that would disqualify you from volunteer service.**

**Timeline for clearances:**

Existing volunteers **\*\***(involved prior to August 25, 2015) who meet the criteria above, have until July 1, 2016 to complete and submit the required clearances. Please be aware Minsi Trails Council is working on a process to begin collecting these clearances prior to this deadline.

New volunteers **\*\***(involved after August 25, 2015) who meet the above criteria above, must complete and submit the required clearances before beginning their volunteer work with youth.

Each of the clearances and the disclosure form must be renewed every **\*\***60 months (5 years)

## **Where do I get the clearances?**

- PA State Police Criminal History – <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
- PA Human Services Child Abuse Clearance – <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>
- FBI Fingerprint Criminal History – [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index\\_dpw.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpw.htm)

Please be reminded, after \*\*July 25, 2015 the fees for the PA State Police Criminal History and the PA Human Services Child Abuse Clearance will be waived for volunteers of non-profits working with children.

## **Where do I submit my clearances once I have them?**

Unit level volunteers should provide their clearances to their Unit Committee Chairman. Specifically, each volunteer should \*\*provide a copy of their clearance documents to the Unit Committee Chairman. Copies of clearances should then be immediately submitted to the Council Office by the Unit Committee Chairman. By law, the Council office must retain clearances for all volunteers.