



Policy to Determine Suitability to Interact with Minors

Anyone expecting to interact with minors as part of the Henrico CASA program must undergo a suitability assessment. The safety and protection of the children we serve are paramount, and individuals may not interact with minors unless deemed suitable based on several assessments. To ensure the safety of participating minors in our program, individuals engaging with minors — whether employees or volunteers — must undergo a suitability assessment before any interaction occurs.

Purpose and Compliance

The Office of Justice Programs requires awardees and sub-awardees of grants from the Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crime and Office on Violence Against Women to make determinations of suitability before covered individuals may interact with participating minors.

Covered Individuals and Scope of Program

A 'Covered Individual' refers to anyone expected or reasonably likely to interact with participating minors. Exceptions include brief, unexpected contact (e.g., a postal carrier delivering mail) and personally accompanied occasional contact, where a suitable adult accompanies the individual throughout the interaction.

An unexpected presence of minors does not automatically trigger this condition unless the program is intended to serve a general or adult population where minors could participate. However, this requirement always applies to CASA staff and volunteers as our program's activities directly benefit minors.

Suitability Assessment

Besides legal checks required by law and/or our policies, the assessment includes:

- Criminal history checks spanning five years in locations where the individual resides or is expected to interact with minors.
- Searches of federal, state, and local sex offender and child abuse registries.
- Other factors considered for suitability include:
 - Withholding consent for required searches or providing false information.
 - Being listed as a registered sex offender or convicted of specific crimes.
 - Determination by a relevant government agency as unsuitable.

Implementation

Suitability determination must precede any interaction with minors. Documentation of this determination must occur and be reviewed every five years. If any information surfaces suggesting unsuitability, a reevaluation will be conducted promptly.

The safety and protection of participating minors are paramount in our program. This policy ensures compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and reinforces our commitment to safeguarding the minors under our care. This policy is a fundamental requirement for all involved in our program and must be strictly adhered to in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a written copy of the Policy to Determine Suitability to Interact with Minors, and that I understand the terms of this policy.

Staff/Volunteer Signature

Date

Staff/Volunteer Name (printed)

Date