How Do I Obtain Criminal Background Clearances as a Student Volunteer at Villanova?

**What clearances do I need in order to volunteer?**

1. Pennsylvania State Police Access to Criminal History (PATCH)
2. Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance
3. FBI Fingerprinting

**How do I obtain the three required clearances?**

- **Pennsylvania State Police Access to Criminal History (PATCH)**
  - PATCH is completed online at [www.epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp](http://www.epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp) and is free for volunteers
  - Click on **New Record Check (Volunteers Only)** on the main logon page
  - Read the instructions and accept the Volunteer Acknowledgement section
  - Complete the information on the Personal Information screen and select Next
  - Results are typically available immediately
  - Print the certification form with the logo in the background by selecting the control number and then selecting the blue hyper link “Certification Form” near the center of the page
  - If you are unable to print the results at this time you will need to document the Control Number, your name as it appears on the request, and the date of the request. This information is necessary in order to retrieve your record check at a later date for printing.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance**
  - The Child Abuse History clearance is completed online at [http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home) and is free for volunteers.
  - You will need to know where you have resided and whom you have resided with since 1975
  - You will need to create a Keystone ID login. It will later ask you to create a password, among a series of security questions.
  - Click on Create Clearance Application.
  - Select VOLUNTEER as the purpose for the application.
  - You will receive an email once the results are available (approximately 14 days) and you will need to login using your Keystone ID to view the certificate. You can also request a paper copy sent to the address you list on your application.

- **FBI Fingerprinting**
  - Register online through Cogent at [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index.htm)
  - Student groups that will volunteer in school districts must register for their fingerprints through the Department of Education (DOE). The DOE will mail each volunteer preliminary results of their fingerprints. This must be requested at the time of registration.
  - Student groups that do not work in a school district will register under the Department of Human Services (DHS). Registrants will receive their results in the mail.
• The cost for this clearance is $27.00 if registering through DOE and $25.75 if registering through DHS. Payment will need to be made online during registration using a debit or credit card.
• Print the registration form (valid for 90 days) and receipt. This is your only opportunity to print the receipt. Retain receipt for reimbursement of the cost of your clearance.
• Take the registration form and valid form of picture identification (https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pde.htm) to VU Public Safety between 12pm-4pm Monday-Friday to be fingerprinted.
• The results of the FBI fingerprints usually take 4-6 weeks and will be mailed to the address provided during registration. Results cannot be retrieved electronically.

If you have been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for ten (10) years or more, you do not have to complete the FBI fingerprinting clearance, but instead can submit a signed affidavit affirming that you are not disqualified from service in the program or under Pennsylvania Law.

The affirmation form can be printed from the University Compliance Office’s Criminal Background Checks webpage. Please note that off-site programs or activities involving minors may have additional requirements that must be met.

How do I submit my clearances?
Student volunteers have the ability to upload clearance results directly to their Novasis account. Please follow the directions on What Do I Need to Know to Upload My Student Volunteer Clearances? handout or the Criminal Background Checks webpage.

Am I eligible to receive reimbursement for the cost of the FBI fingerprinting?
Students volunteering in a program or activity involving the participation of minors that is registered through the University Compliance Office Online Registration System or that is sponsored or officially recognized by the University, are eligible for reimbursement for the cost of your FBI clearance. In order to receive reimbursement, you must submit the results of your FBI clearance within 60 days of the date of your registration receipt. Once the fingerprinting clearance is received by Villanova University, you will receive an email with detailed instructions on how to request reimbursement. Villanova University will reimburse the cost of the FBI clearance only once. The reimbursement will be credited to your student account.

How long are volunteer clearances valid?
Background check certifications are valid for 60 months from the date issued.

For additional information please visit the University Compliance Office webpage at:

http://compliance.villanova.edu