

**CHILD PROTECTION UPDATE:** The General Assembly passed and the governor has now signed [House Bill 1276](#) into law—it is now Act 15 of 2015. The Act makes several changes to Act 153, including the following:

- Defines "routine interaction" as regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person's employment or volunteer responsibilities
- Defines "immediate vicinity" as an area in which an individual is physically present with a child and can see, hear, direct and assess the activities of the child
- Clarifies that for internships, work-study or co-op programs, the person the school and the employer identify as the child's supervisor is the person responsible for the child's welfare and that individual must be in the immediate vicinity of the child at regular intervals
- Waives the fees for child abuse clearances and state criminal background checks for volunteers and permits these free certifications to be provided only once every 57 months; reduces the fee to \$8 for school employees
- Clarifies that volunteers need to obtain certifications if they have "direct volunteer contact", meaning they are responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children AND have routine interaction with children
- Prohibits the use of certifications obtained for free as a volunteer from being used for employment or for purposes other than as a volunteer
- Adds a presumption of good faith, stating that an employer or individual responsible for selecting volunteers is presumed to act in good faith when identifying which volunteers must submit certifications and in maintaining records
- Clarifies that students enrolled in a school who volunteer for an event on school grounds that is sponsored by the school do not need certifications as volunteers if they are not responsible for a child's welfare
- Permits individuals (with the exception of volunteers receiving free certifications) to use current certifications to apply for employment or as a volunteer and to serve as an employee or a volunteer
- Requires employees to obtain new certifications every 60 months; employees who do not have certification or whose certifications are older than 60 months must obtain new certifications by December 31, 2015

Beginning August 25, 2015, volunteers must obtain renewed certifications every 60 months; if the current certifications are more than 60 months old, the volunteer has one year to obtain renewed certifications and if the volunteer never had certifications, the individual must obtain certifications by July 1, 2016.