

# Policy on Calgary Outlink's Use of Police Information Checks and Vulnerable Sector Searches

## Purpose

Calgary Outlink is a community based 2SLGBTQIA+ charitable organization that aims to provide support, education, outreach, and referrals for 2SLGBTQIA+ and allied communities in Calgary, Alberta. Additionally, Calgary Outlink has a history of causing harm to members of our communities by utilizing the RCMP and Calgary Police Service (CPS) to conduct a variety of informational checks, failing to consider the complex and difficult history that queer communities have with the police. Being mindful of these factors, Calgary Outlink maintains this policy to give guidance on how the organization can fulfill its mandate, acknowledging that some checks are required by legislation, given the nature of the work that Calgary Outlink undertakes, while ensuring it corrects for, and prevents further, the harm it has caused by performing these checks unnecessarily.

## Persons Affected

The Calgary Outlink Staff, Volunteers, Board of Directors, and Service Users.

## Policy Statement

1. Warning Regarding Police Engagement
  - a. Calgary Outlink may request that an individual obtain a Police Information Check and/or a Vulnerable Sector Search, acknowledging that engagement with CPS may be necessary, if required by an external funder or legislative requirement.
  - b. In undertaking these checks, Calgary Outlink recognizes that the process may be harmful to the individuals that engage with CPS. Further, Calgary Outlink recognizes that information provided to CPS may become known to Calgary Outlink. Therefore, Calgary Outlink will attempt to mitigate all negative aspects of these checks. Mitigation attempts can include, but are not limited to:
    - i. Accompanying individuals through the process;
    - ii. Correcting CPS when misgendering occurs;
    - iii. Correcting CPS when deadnaming occurs;
    - iv. Covering all costs associated with the check(s); and
    - v. Maintaining the strictest confidentiality of information (e.g. previous names of individuals) that Calgary Outlink becomes aware of.
2. Confidentiality of Information
  - a. No incident unto itself will disqualify a person from participation in Calgary Outlink. The key element is the context related to any "incident".
  - b. Should an "incident" be reported, the individual will be invited to engage in a discussion with a member of the Board of Directors and a Staff Member. The

purpose of this discussion shall be for the purpose of providing further context and engaging in a discussion regarding how the incident might relate to the business of Calgary Outlink.

- c. This conversation shall be confidential, and the content of it, including the outcome of the conversation, shall only be accessible by:
  - i. Relevant Staff;
  - ii. The Board Member that engaged in the conversation; and
  - iii. The applicant.

## Responsibilities

### 1. Board of Directors

- a. Board Meetings: The Board of Directors meets to provide oversight into the governance of the organization, including, but are not limited to, reviewing financial statements and responding to requests/events.
- b. Committee Meetings: The Board of Directors also directs some of its work to topic-specific committees.

### 2. Staff

- a. Peer Support: Staff provide support by email, phone call, video call, text, social media messaging, or in-person.
- b. Informal Resource Navigation and Referral: Staff support Service Users in finding information and services.
- c. Administrative and Logistic Related Activities: Staff manage all day-to-day operational activities at Calgary Outlink.
- d. Education: Calgary Outlink provides education and workshops to Community Members, other organizations, and businesses on a number of topics related to gender and sexual diversity.
- e. Outreach & Events: Staff may go out to community events or engage in direct outreach activities to spread awareness or garner support for the organization and its activities. Staff may also participate in or organize events and activities that help further the organization's mission.

### 3. Volunteers

- a. Peer Support Groups: Calgary Outlink runs a variety of social and support groups for community members.
- b. 1-on-1 Peer Support: Volunteers provide direct peer support over the phone, online, and in-person.
- c. Education, Outreach, & Events: Volunteers may support community outreach and awareness activities by tabling at events. They may also lead workshops or activities or support in the planning and running of events.

### 4. Fundraising

- a. Casino Volunteering: Calgary Outlink engages in a partnership with Casinos to generate funds for the operation of the organization. This requires the organization to provide Volunteers to the casino in exchange for funding.
- b. Other Fundraising Activities: Calgary Outlink may participate in any number of fundraising activities that may involve direct participation from Volunteers, Staff,

and the Board of Directors. This could include running events, preparing letters, making phone calls, and taking payments and/or personal information.

## Procedures

1. Calgary Outlink's Alternatives to Police Checks
  - a. Any Calgary Outlink policy/procedure/document/etc. that refers to either a "Canadian Criminal Record Checks" or "Intervention Record Checks" shall henceforth be interpreted to mean "Police Information Checks" and/or "Vulnerable Sector Searches."
  - b. Prior to asking an individual to obtain a Police Information Check and/or a Vulnerable Sector Search, Calgary Outlink shall outline to the individual what the needs are, and how a Police Information Check and/or Vulnerable Sector Search will meet those needs.
  - c. Prior to asking an individual to obtain a Police Information Check and/or a Vulnerable Sector Search, Calgary Outlink shall attempt to satisfy its needs using alternative methods. These methods can include, but are not limited to:
    - i. External references that speak to the individual's ability to perform duties;
    - ii. Training related to the individual's duties and the associated risks;
    - iii. Completion of an intake interview;
    - iv. Regular reviews assessing if a concern has taken place; and/or
    - v. Effective policy that allows concerns to be raised.

## Definitions

- **Canadian Criminal Record Checks:** Determine if you have been charged or convicted of a crime in Canada.
- **Police Information Checks:** Information is searched from three databases and the results will be provided on a Calgary Police Service certificate letter. Disclosure will include Canada-wide Criminal Record History, Vulnerable Sector Search (if required) and Police History; this includes Local Police Information and Alberta Provincial court records.
- **Vulnerable Sector Search:** A vulnerable sector verification determines if individuals working with the vulnerable sector have a sexual offense conviction for which they've received a pardon.
- **Intervention Record Checks:** Performed on professionals who want to work with children or youth, or adults applying to become foster caregivers, kinship caregivers, or adoptive parents to a child or youth.

## References

- Royal Canadian Mounted Police - Canadian Criminal Record Checks:  
<https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/criminal-record-checks>
- Calgary Police Service - Police Information Checks:  
<https://www.calgary.ca/cps/public-services/police-information-checks.html>

- Calgary Police Service - Vulnerable Sector Searches:  
<https://www.calgary.ca/cps/public-services/vulnerable-sector-searches.html>
- Inform Alberta:  
<https://informalberta.ca/public/service/serviceProfileStyled.do?serviceQueryId=1050354>

## Revision History

- March 18, 2024: reformatting & minor revisions
- March 20, 2023: minor revisions
- October 18, 2021: new policy