

Volunteering for AA Meetings in Correctional Facilities



Presented by:

Rob F.

Area 83 Corrections Chair

(With "Thanks" to District 66)



Introduction

- The information in this presentation is a general overview of the process for becoming an AA Volunteer in Correctional Facilities within Area 83
- The information will be available in a downloadable document on the Correctional page of the Area83AA.org website.



Correction Facilities Breakdown within Area 83:

- 9 Provincial
- 10 Federal
- 2 State (New York)
- 3 Youth



Overview of Becoming a Volunteer:

- Submit full name/address/phone/email to your District's Correctional Facilities (CF) Chair
 - CF Chair will submit your info to the appropriate authorities
- The Royal Ottawa will issue a Letter of Authorization requesting a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)
 - Letter will be forwarded to CF Chair who will forward it to you
- Apply for Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)
 - Online Only (a few exceptions apply)
- Complete Volunteer Application once you have received your VSC Clearance
- Submit VSC Clearance and Volunteer Application to CF Chair
 - CF Chair will submit your documents to the Facility's Volunteer Coordinator
- CF Chair will be notified when you are cleared to take training
 - CF Chair will notify you when you are cleared
- Attend onsite training delivered by Facility
 - Training schedule will be forwarded to CF Chair
- You will be added to the list of authorized AA Volunteers at the Facility



Sample Letter of Authorization



Services de santé
Royal Ottawa
Health Care Group

INTEGRATED FORENSIC PROGRAM

Forensic Treatment Unit – Southeast
Brockville Mental Health Centre
F. 613.345.1461 F. 613.345.7276

Secure Treatment Unit
of the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional & Treatment Centre
Brockville Mental Health Centre
T. 613.341.2870 F. 613.341.2884

Forensic Treatment Unit – Champlain
Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre
T. 613.722.6521 F. 613.798.2992

September 8, 2022

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: BACKGROUND CHECKS

Please accept this letter as confirmation that [REDACTED] will be entering the St. Lawrence Correctional and Treatment Center, Secure Treatment Unit as a volunteer.

[REDACTED] will be required to obtain a criminal record and judicial matters check intended for individuals seeking a volunteer and/or employment position with children or vulnerable person(s).

If you have any questions regarding this matter please feel free to contact me at the number listed below. I am available Monday- Friday from 8:00am until 4:00 pm.

Thank-you, [REDACTED]

Secure Treatment Unit



Vulnerable Sector Check

- A VSC is a criminal record check for those working or volunteering with vulnerable persons
- There is no cost for a Volunteer Vulnerable Sector Check if you have your Letter of Authorization .



Vulnerable Sector Check

APPLICATIONS ARE NO LONG BEING ACCEPTED AT OPP STATIONS, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS – READ “SEE EXCEPTIONS” ON APPLICATION WEBSITE

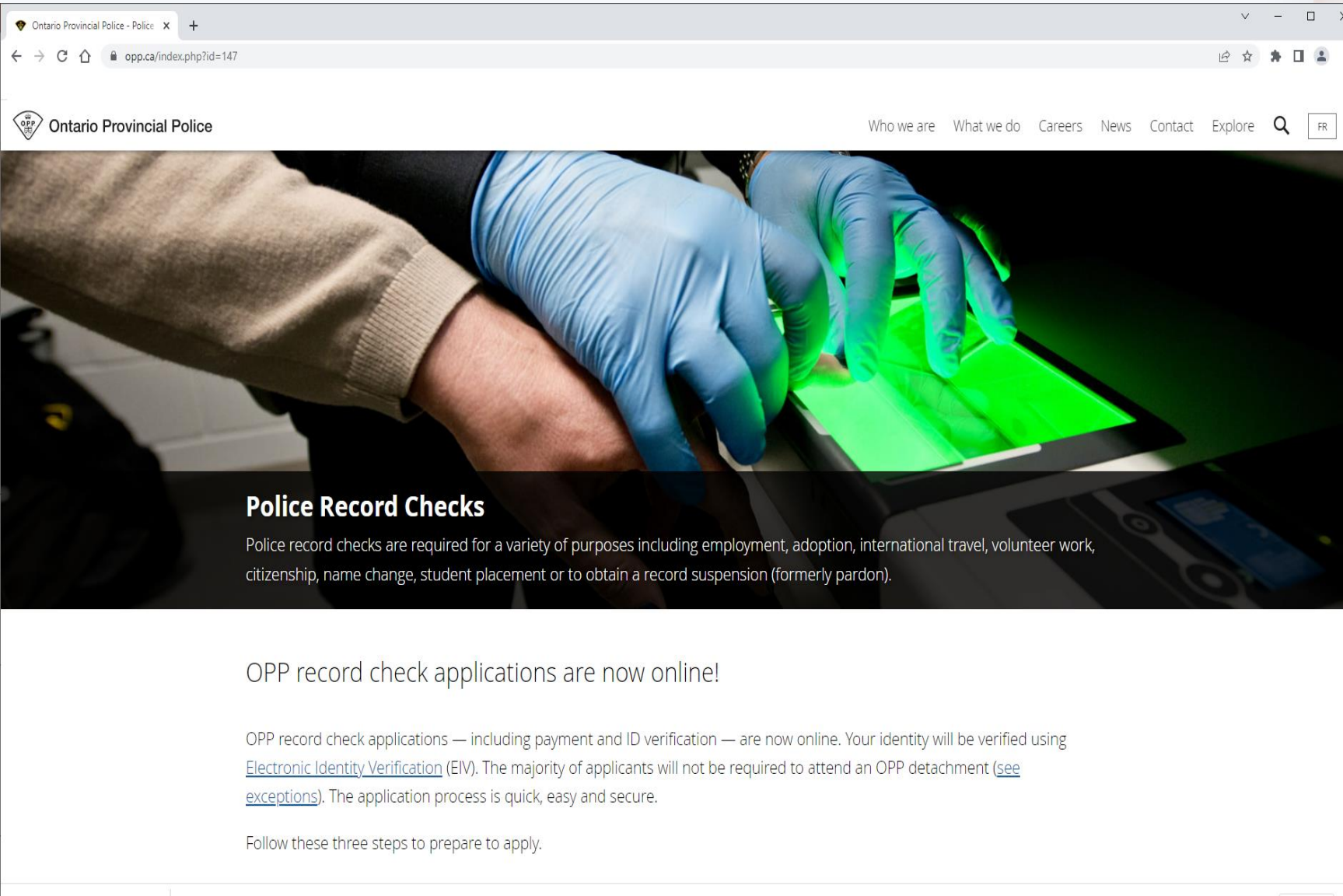
ONLINE APPLICATIONS

opp.ca/recordchecks

- Read the information in the [Electronic Identity Verification](#) and [see exceptions](#) links on the above website page before starting your application
- **OPP is not the local police service of jurisdiction for Ottawa, Toronto, GTA, Sudbury, Whitby, Oshawa**



OPP Records Check



The screenshot shows the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) website. The browser address bar displays "opp.ca/index.php?id=147". The page features the OPP logo and a navigation menu with links: "Who we are", "What we do", "Careers", "News", "Contact", "Explore", and a search icon. A large image of a person in a blue glove scanning a document is the background for the main content area.

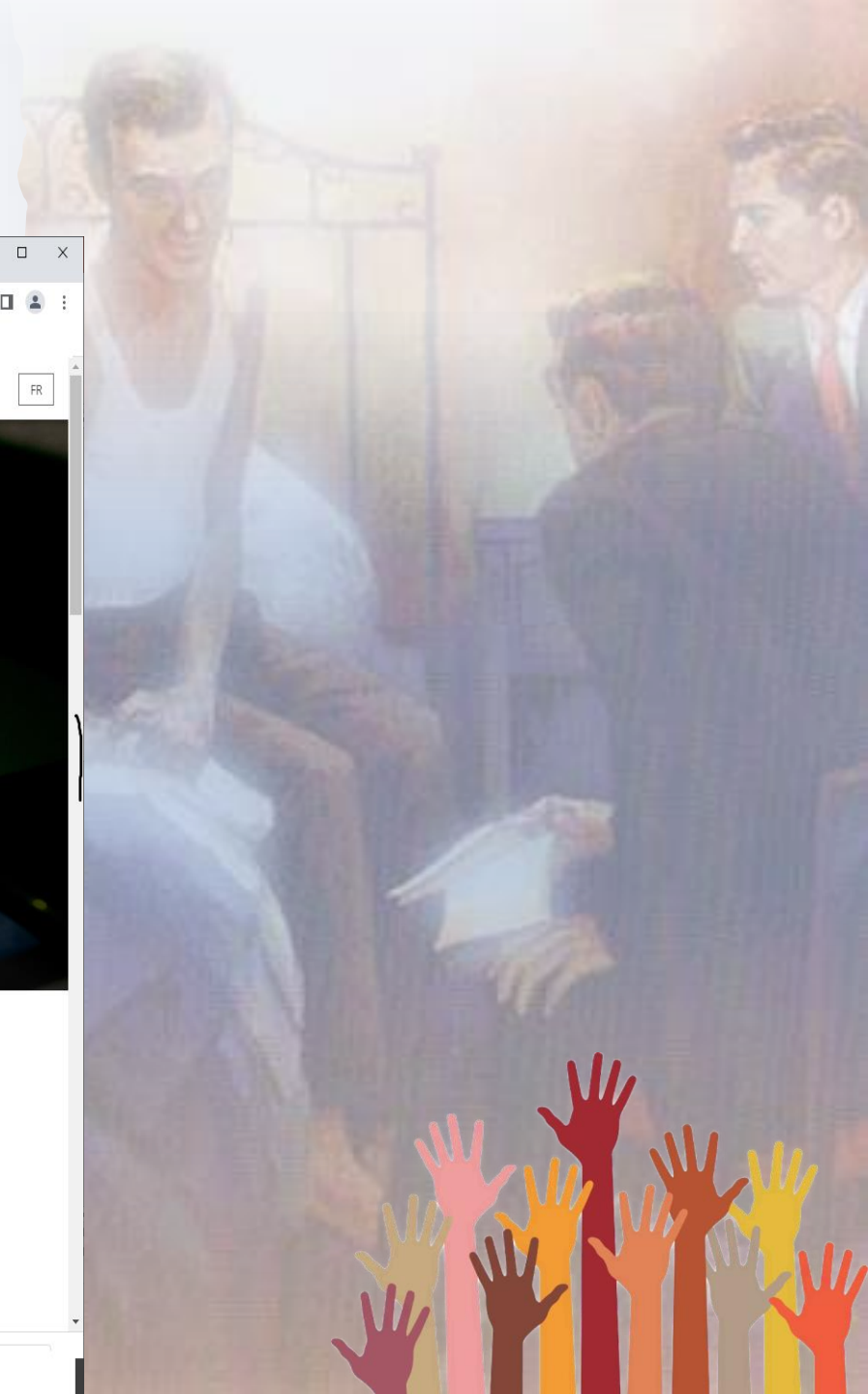
Police Record Checks

Police record checks are required for a variety of purposes including employment, adoption, international travel, volunteer work, citizenship, name change, student placement or to obtain a record suspension (formerly pardon).

OPP record check applications are now online!

OPP record check applications — including payment and ID verification — are now online. Your identity will be verified using [Electronic Identity Verification \(EIV\)](#). The majority of applicants will not be required to attend an OPP detachment ([see exceptions](#)). The application process is quick, easy and secure.

Follow these three steps to prepare to apply.



VULNERABLE SECTOR CHECK ONLINE APPLICATIONS

REQUIREMENTS:

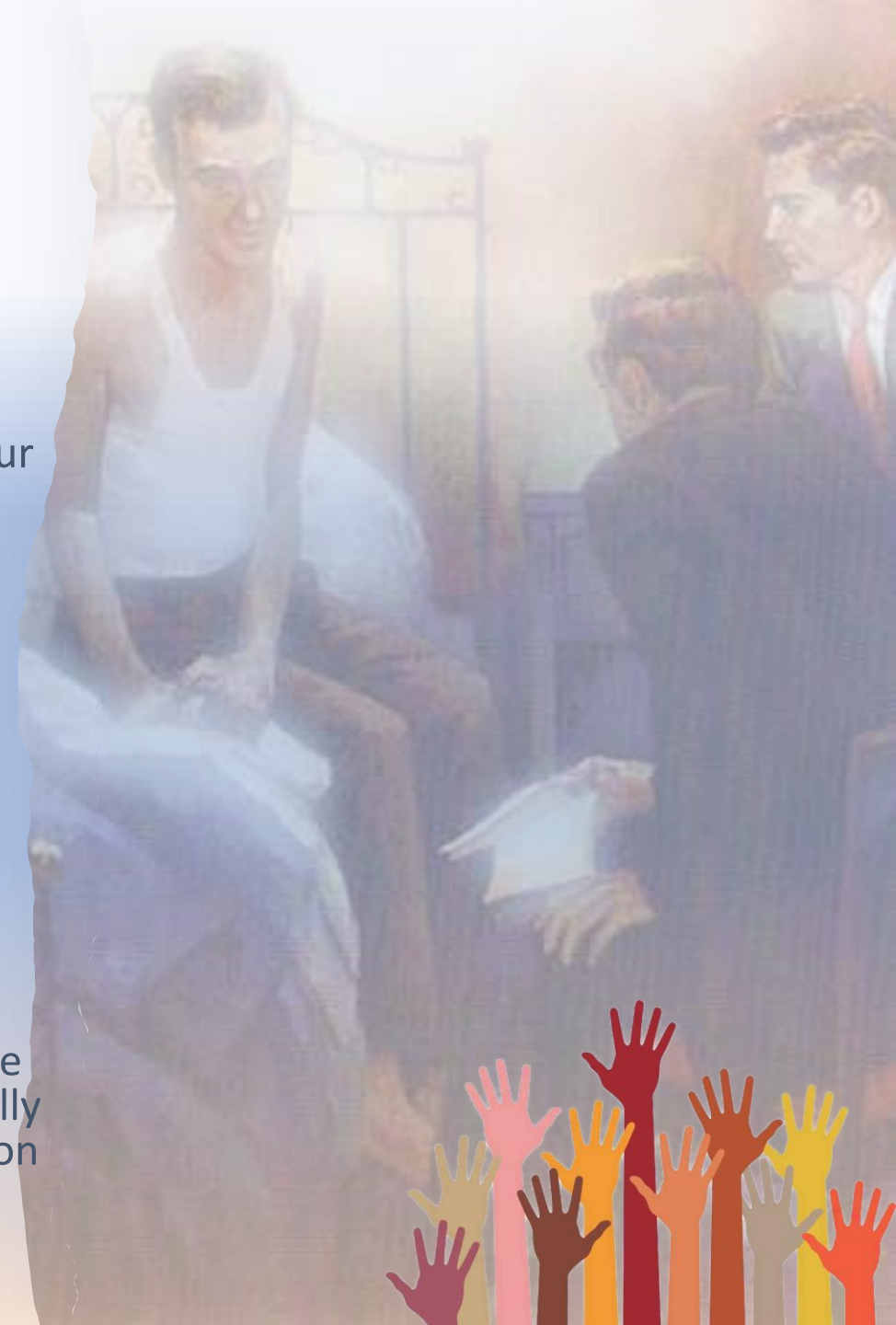
- **Letter of Authorization for VSC from the facility**
 - pdf or jpg file can be uploaded during the application process
- **5-year residential address history**
- **Government Issued Identification may or may not be required, depending on if you are able to complete the Electronic Identify Verification (EIV) process.**



VULNERABLE SECTOR CHECK ONLINE APPLICATIONS

ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION VERIFICATION

- The EIV process creates four identifier questions relating to your credit history and personal information (does not affect your credit rating!)
- Questions may be multiple choice
- Sample questions:
 - Cell phone provider
 - City of residence during a certain year
 - Former employer
 - Last four digits of your Social Insurance Number
 - Name of street that you live on
- Note that prior to starting the EVI process you will be given a chance to review/modify your application information but once you complete the EVI questions your application is automatically submitted, i.e. no chance to go back and review your application information





Ontario

Ministry of Community Safety &
Correctional Services

Volunteer Appointment Application

Name (Last, First, Middle)		
Address, City, Postal Code		Home Telephone No.
Is it convenient to telephone you at your place of business? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Email Address (If applicable)
Languages spoken (X) <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Italian <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		Work Telephone No.
		Do you have the use of a car? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What hobbies and recreational activities do you enjoy?		
Have you any academic or other qualifications or experience(s) which you feel you could utilize as a volunteer?		
Affiliation with community groups (service organizations, etc.) Alcoholics Anonymous		
Any previous volunteer experience? Service Positions within Alcoholics Anonymous		
How did you learn of our program? District 66 Alcoholics Anonymous		
My preference for volunteer involvement would be with <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Probation/Parole Why do you wish to be a volunteer in this program?		
References		
Reference Name		Telephone No.
Address		Occupation
Reference Name		Telephone No.
Address		Occupation
In making this application I hereby give the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services authority to contact the persons named as references and to make enquiries with the police authorities as may be deemed necessary to ascertain my suitability as a volunteer.		
Signed		Date day month year

Volunteer Application

Volunteer Application will be supplied by your District CF Chair or can be downloaded from the Correctional Facilities page on the Area83AA.org website

Complete the Volunteer Application

Onsite Training

- CF Chair will be notified when onsite training is scheduled
- Delivered by Correctional Services
- Completion of training is mandatory
- Approximately 3 hours in duration
- Trainees will be issued a Correctional Volunteer Handbook
- CF Chair will be notified when an applicant has completed training and is authorized to enter the Facility



Visiting a Correctional Facility (1 of 2)

- CF Chair responsible for scheduling Volunteers
- Facility will maintain a list of Authorized AA Volunteers
- Be familiar with the rules and regulations as outlined in the Correctional Volunteer Handbook
- Suggest that at least 2 AA Volunteers attend meetings
- Authorized Volunteers Only
 - You are welcome to bring other Volunteers but they must be authorized to enter the Facility, i.e. on the list of AA Volunteers maintained by the Facility
- First impressions are especially important so look your best and be on time
- Bring Identification
- Arrive early to allow time for Visitor processing



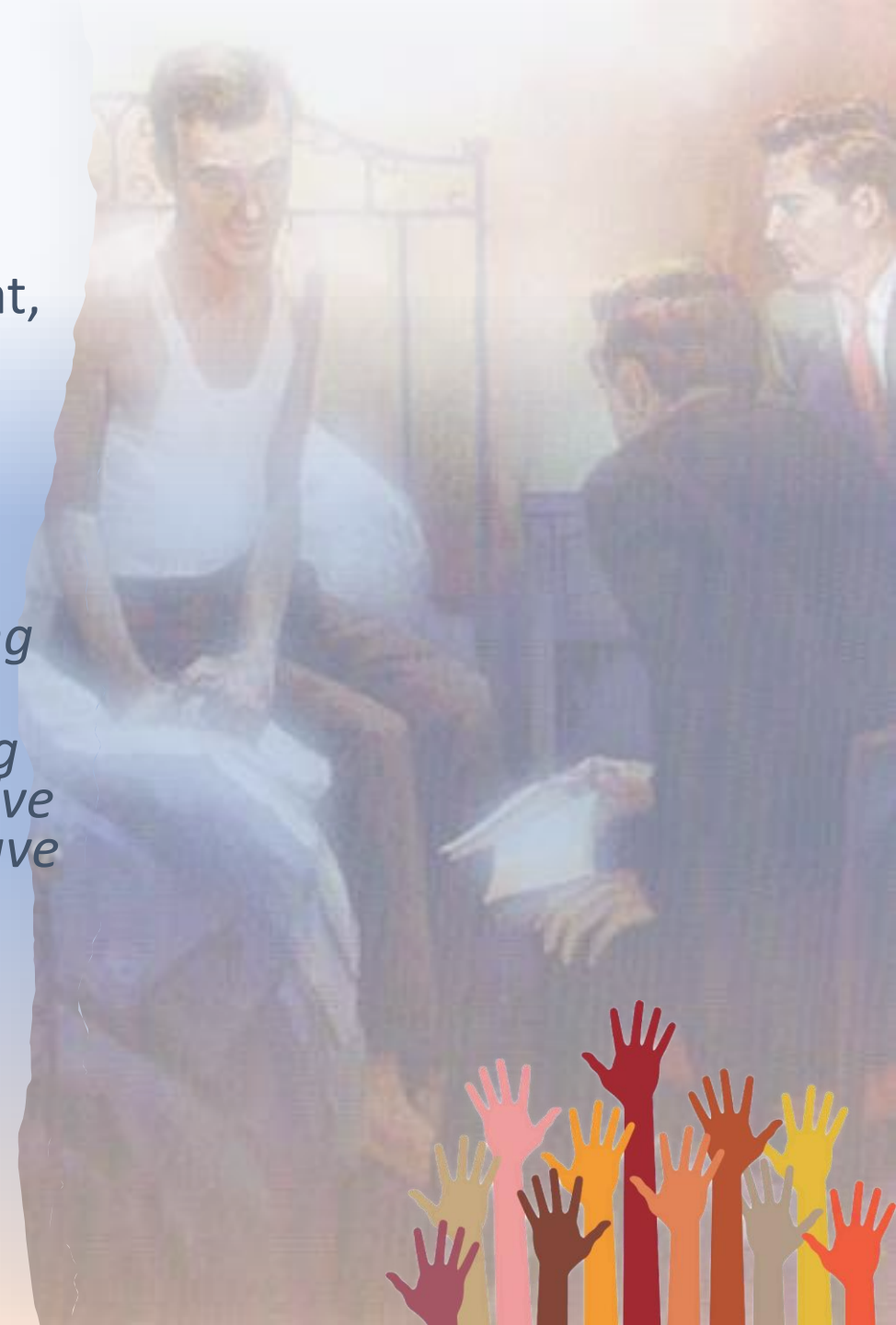
Visiting a Correctional Facility (2 of 2)

- Lockdowns
 - Occasionally the Facility may be in lockdown mode at which time no volunteers may enter. You may not know ahead of time if a lockdown is in place.
- Searches
 - Staff may visually inspect the contents of a visitor's purse, bag or package
- Follow current COVID-19 Protocols (subject to change)
 - Rapid Antigen Test immediately before entering Facility
 - CF Chair will provide Rapid Antigen Tests to Volunteers
 - Take a picture of your results and have ready to show upon entry to the Facility
 - Mask policies differ from facility to facility



Suggested AA Meeting Guidelines

- Meeting materials available at the Facility (Format, Preamble, 12 Steps, etc.)
- Speaker and/or Discussion meeting
- Suggested meeting length is 1 hour
- *“When carrying the message into a correctional facility, we share experience, strength and hope with other alcoholics as we do at any A.A. meeting on the “outside.” **
- *“People in custody are more interested in learning how we got and stayed sober through A.A.’s Twelve Steps, rather than hearing about time we may have spent in prison” **
- Maintain Confidentiality
- Encourage questions and answer from your own experience
- Keep It Simple
- Remember your Training



Online Resources

VIDEOS

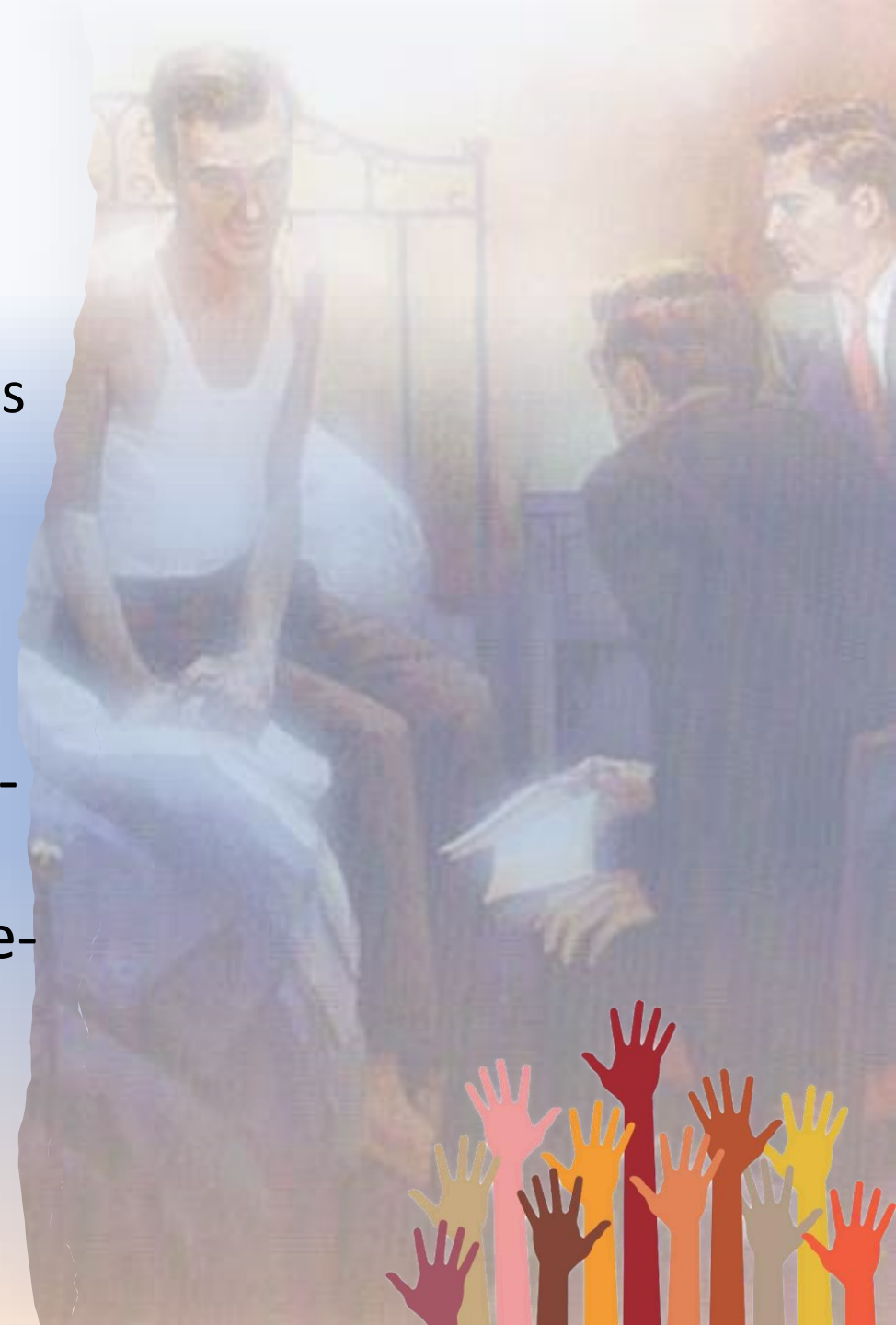
- <https://www.aa.org/A.A-in-Correctional-Facilities>
- <https://www.aa.org/Carrying-the-Message-Behind-These-Walls>

READING MATERIAL

- <https://www.aa.org/correctional-facilities-aa-group-handbook>
- <https://www.aa.org/sharing-from-behind-the-walls>

AREA 83

- <https://area83aa.org/resources/corrections>



Conclusion

**“Having prison
experience is not
a prerequisite -
sobriety in A.A.
is”**

