Austin Partners in Education

Volunteer Coordinator Handbook

2022-2023

Austin Partners in Education
P.O. BOX 6118
Austin, TX 78762
512-637-0983

APIE's Mission

Austin Partners in Education (APIE) is an independent 501(c)(3) organization, created in 2004 through a partnership between AISD and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. We improve college and career readiness and expand STEM opportunities through community engagement. APIE's vision is for the Austin community and classrooms to work together to ensure academic excellence and personal success for all students.

APIE Contact Information

School Connections Manager: Wen Nguyen, wnguyen@austinpartners.org

Phone: 512.637.0983

APIE's Volunteer Program

APIE is under contract with AISD to publicize volunteer opportunities, register school volunteers, and run background checks to ensure that all AISD schools adhere to proper safety protocols as dictated by AISD policy and state law.

APIE partners with a ***principal-designated*** Volunteer Coordinator at each school to facilitate the volunteer process and provide support to the school with their volunteer needs.

Roles & Responsibilities

Austin Partners in Education

Austin Partners in Education will:

- Provide criminal history background checks for volunteers, in accordance with federal regulation and AISD policy.
- Provide schools with a page on the APIE website to post each school's specific volunteer opportunities.
- Refer new volunteers to schools that request volunteer support.
- Provide schools with informational materials to be used to support volunteers.

Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator is the primary point of contact for all school volunteers.

Volunteer Coordinators will:

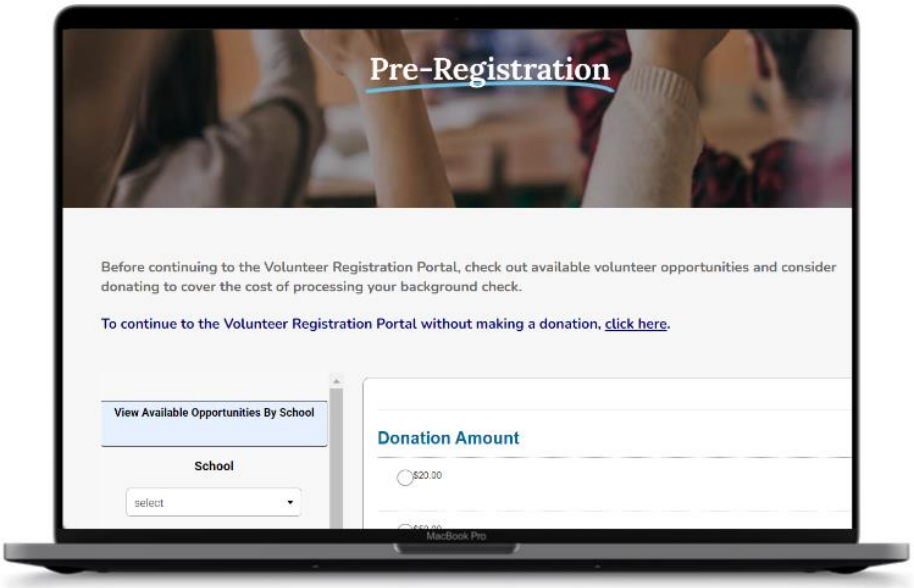
- Encourage all incoming volunteers to register *for each specific volunteer opportunity in which they want to participate* through the APIE website.
- Log into Volunteer Coordinator Portal and verify Name and Date of Birth match the identifiable information on the volunteer's government-issued ID
- Provide volunteers basic training on school procedures and district policies including FERPA.
- Update the APIE Status of the volunteers on the Volunteer Coordinator portal on a regular basis.
- Provide a sign-in sheet or have volunteers use RAPTOR to sign-in.
- Collect signed AISD Confidentiality Agreement form from volunteers.

Volunteer Registration Overview

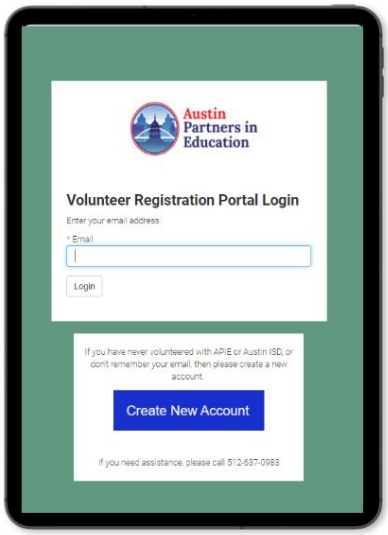
The procedure for volunteer registration is as follows:

1. Visit www.austinpartners.org
2. Click the “Volunteer” button at the top right.

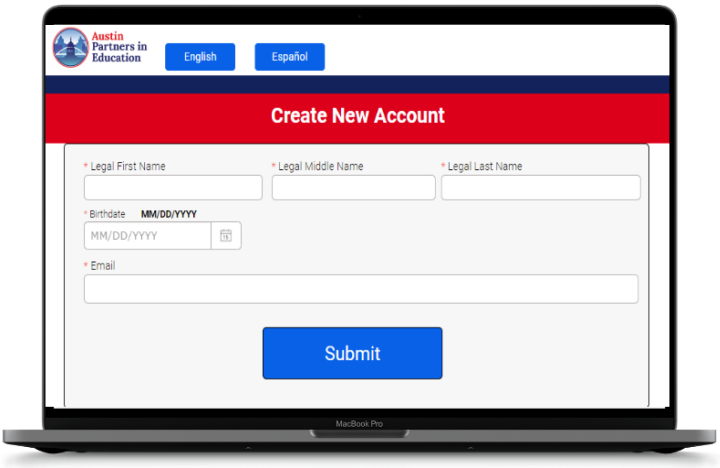
3. The volunteer will be directed to a Pre-Registration page where they are able to preview available opportunities by school or elect to cover the cost of their background check.



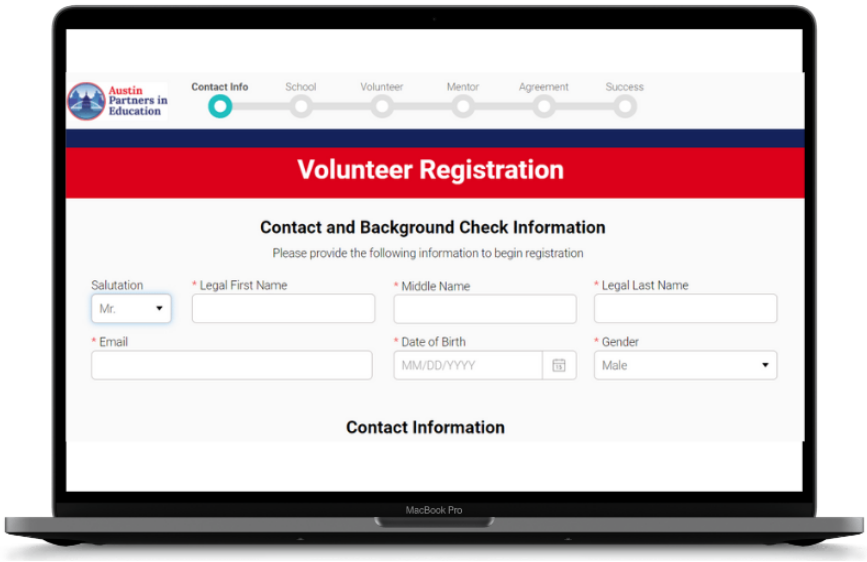
4. Next, the volunteer will be directed to the Volunteer Registration Portal Login. If the volunteer is an existing volunteer, they will need to plug in the email address they used to volunteer in previous school years. Once the email has been submitted, the volunteer will receive a 5-digit code to their inbox. They will then need to insert the code to enter the Volunteer Registration Portal.



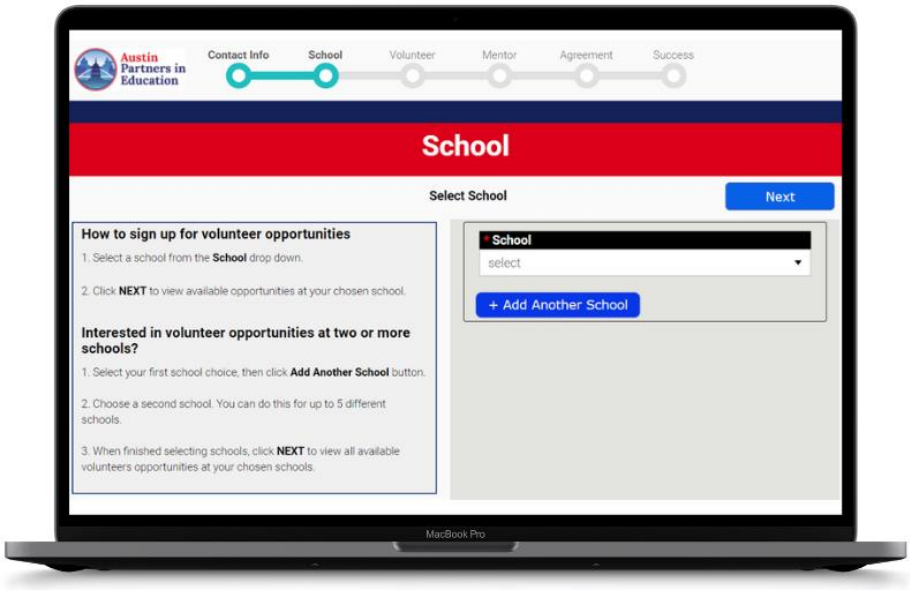
5. If the volunteer has never volunteered with Austin ISD, they will need to click Create New Account button and enter their Name, Date of Birth, and Email. Once their information has been submitted, the volunteer will receive a 5-digit code to their inbox. They will then need to insert the code to enter the Volunteer Registration Portal.



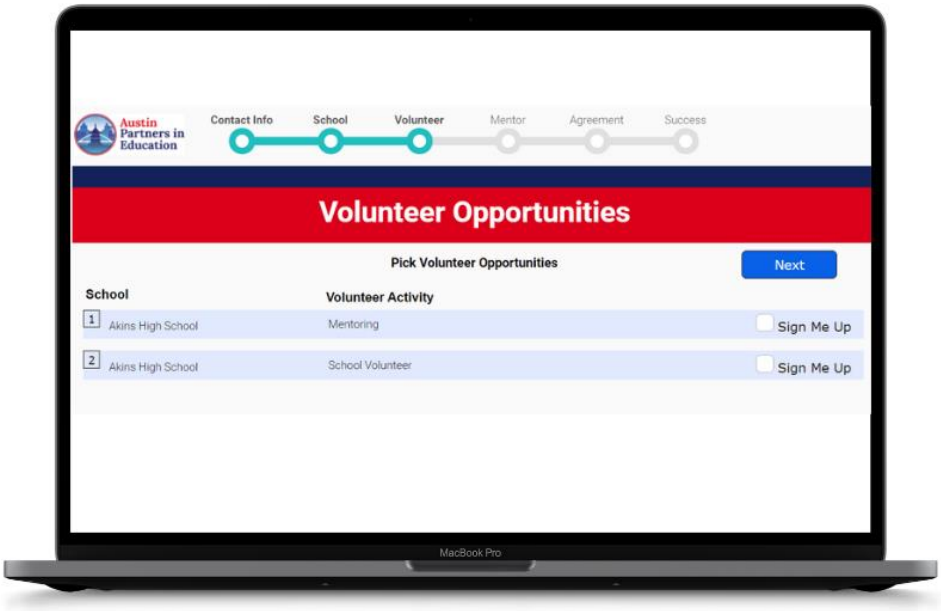
6. The volunteer will be asked to enter their contact information and authorize a background check.



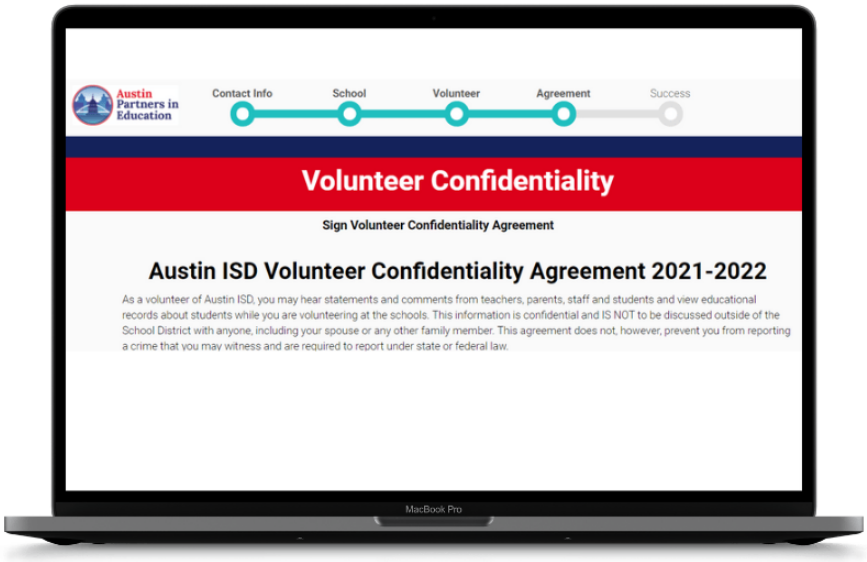
7. Volunteers will be routed to the School page where they can select the school(s) in which they wish to volunteer. They can select up to 5 schools.



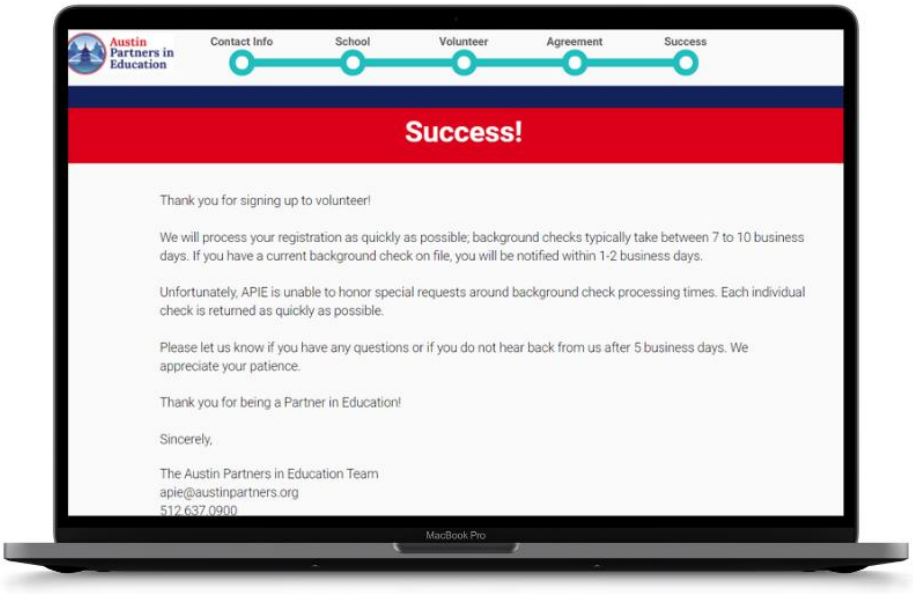
8. Volunteers can select the available volunteer opportunities from the campuses they selected in the previous screen by clicking the **Sign Me Up** checkbox. Click Next to proceed to the next page.



9. Volunteers will electronically sign the AISD Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement form and click Submit.



10. Success! After registration completion, volunteers will receive email confirmation that their information has been submitted. Volunteers will receive an email from Austin Partners in Education of the status of their background check within 7-10 business days.



11. Once the volunteer has been processed with an approved background check, Coordinators can verify their status via the APIE Volunteer Coordinator portal. It is best practice for the Volunteer Coordinator to contact volunteers. (Information about how to access the Volunteer Coordinator Portal is located on page 14 of this manual.)

Registration FAQs

How long do background checks take?

Volunteers with no criminal history should receive an approval notice by email within 7-10 business days.

What happens if a volunteer does not pass their background check?

If a volunteer has a criminal history, the volunteer will be contacted by APIE's background check company, who will work with the volunteer to resolve any issues regarding the results. If volunteers have questions about the process, they can also call or email APIE.

What if a volunteer does not have an email address?

To receive a background check from Austin Partners in Education, the volunteer is required to have an email address. APIE's volunteer database program relies on unique email addresses to track and communicate with volunteers. This means volunteers are not able to share an email with a spouse, family member, or friend. If a volunteer does not have an email address:

- The Volunteer Coordinator can assist them in creating an email address
- The Volunteer can contact Austin Partners in Education for support

Who needs a background check?

School districts are required to obtain criminal history record information on school volunteers (TX Education Code Section 22.083). The Safety Check (RAPTOR) screening performed for campus visitors *does not satisfy* the legal requirements to obtain criminal history information as it only checks for registration as a sex offender, not all criminal history. If a volunteer will be returning to campus in a volunteer capacity more than once, a background check through APIE is required.

All volunteers working with students virtually (via electronic device) must get a background check.

Verifying Volunteer ID

A volunteer's background check is NOT complete until their legal name (first, middle, and last) and birthdate have been verified on campus. Because APIE uses an online background check system, this step is very important to ensure the accuracy of the check.

Before allowing a volunteer to meet with students, your school MUST confirm that the legal name – first, middle, and last – along with the birthdate used on the volunteer's driver's license, passport, or other government-issued picture ID, matches the information provided for the background check.

It is essential that this step is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information used for the check. ***APIE accepts no responsibility for misrepresentation or inaccurate information submitted during registration***. It is the responsibility of the school to verify this information before allowing volunteers into your program.

If any information is inconsistent, please notify APIE so that a new background check can be processed.

Background Check FAQS

What are the background check clearance levels?

Level 3 – Drivers: Volunteers are approved to drive their own child and other students to off-campus events.

Level 2 – Low supervision or unsupervised volunteers: Volunteers may work with students without direct supervision from AISD staff.

Level 1 – High supervision volunteers: Volunteers may only work in on-campus environments where staff is present and engaged with the students.

Not Approved: The applicant cannot volunteer through APIE. Volunteer may have their background check run every year, if requested.

Do volunteers approved by APIE need to check in through RAPTOR?

Yes, all visitors to a school campus will be told to follow regular school processes, including complying with office check in procedures through the RAPTOR system.

Volunteer Opportunity Guidelines

APIE will post the following volunteer opportunities for each school:

- Mentoring
- School Volunteer
- Field Trip Chaperone (Family Only)
- Field Trip Driver (Family Only)
- Tutoring

If a school wants to post additional volunteer opportunities, such as "Robotics Volunteers" or "Math Tutors," they should contact the School Connections Manager.

APIE only screens volunteers who are participating on an AISD campus as well as virtual volunteers. Different volunteer opportunities may require different levels of background check clearance, so it is important that an approval for a specific volunteer opportunity is not interpreted as a blanket volunteer approval.

All face-to-face volunteer opportunities must meet ALL of the APIE/AISD guidelines:

1. Opportunities must be validated by a campus administrator as an appropriate public school program with adequate volunteer supervision.
2. Opportunities must be free for AISD student participants.
3. Opportunities must be secular in nature.
4. Opportunities must be confined to campus property.
5. Opportunities must have an expectation of regular volunteer visits throughout the school year.

Also:

- APIE disclaims liability for volunteers.
- Volunteers serve at the discretion of the principal.
- An APIE approved background check does not require a school to use a volunteer.
- A school reserves the right to terminate any volunteer's participation in any program. APIE can support the school in that effort, if requested.

Volunteer Opportunity FAQs

What if my opportunity does not meet the above guidelines? (ex: student teaching, academic credit programs)

If your campus is hosting opportunities that do not meet the above guidelines, but for which you still wish to obtain background checks for your volunteers, you may do so independently.

Student teachers, observers, and those seeking credit for an academic program do not meet the APIE guidelines for background checks. Those individuals looking to work in the schools need to have appropriate background checks performed by the AISD Human Resources Student Teacher program.

Does a volunteer have to sign up for more than one opportunity on campus?

Different opportunities require different levels of background check clearance, so volunteers should register for each opportunity each year. Background check approvals are for specific opportunities. Additionally, different volunteer opportunities may require different levels of scrutiny, so it is important that an approval for a specific volunteer opportunity is not interpreted as a blanket volunteer approval. Volunteers interested in volunteering for additional opportunities can sign up at the APIE website by finding the additional opportunity in which they wish to participate.

How long does it take to get a volunteer opportunity posted on the APIE website?

Once volunteer opportunity requests are communicated to the School Connections Manager, the School Connections Manager will reach out to the principal to obtain approval to post the opportunity.

Once your opportunity is posted, volunteers can immediately begin registering for this opportunity.

What if the volunteer is Not Approved for the opportunity?

If a volunteer does not appear on your list of approved volunteers in the Volunteer Coordinator Portal, that will indicate that they did not pass their background check for that specific volunteer opportunity. Please contact APIE with any questions regarding a specific volunteer if you are unsure of their application status.

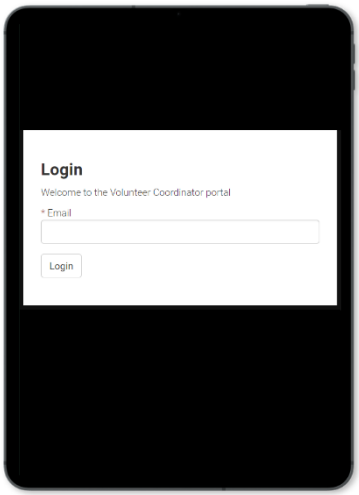
APIE & School Communication

Weekly Link from APIE & Required Response

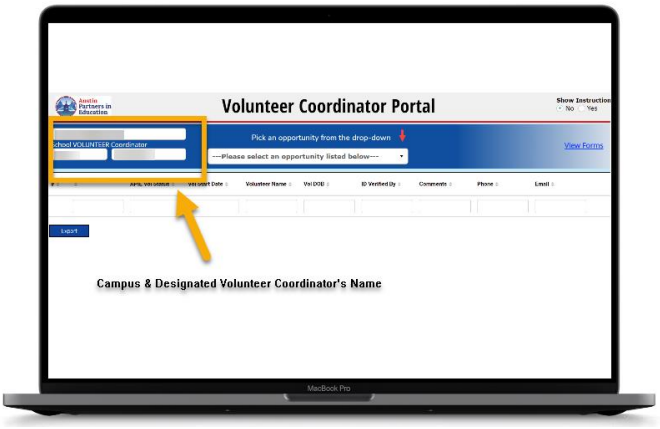
At the start of the school year, APIE will send an email link to the Volunteer Coordinator with a complete report of all background check approved volunteers, listed by opportunity. This report or link should be bookmarked and saved so you can check real-time for new volunteers, as APIE will only send weekly email reminders.

What To Expect On The Volunteer Coordinator Portal Link:

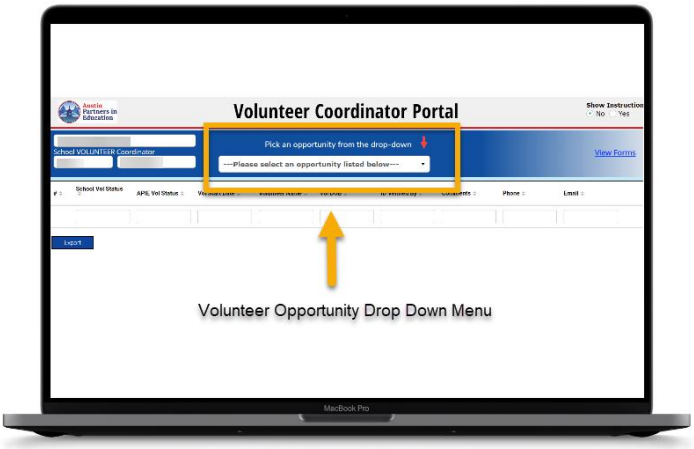
1. Coordinators can access the Volunteer Coordinator Portal and log in with their AISD email:
   https://austinpartners.formtitan.com/volunteercoordinator#/



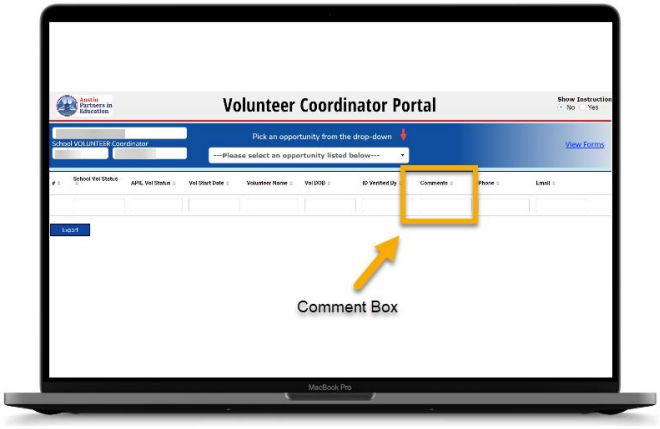
2. Once logged in, the Coordinator should see their campus and name in the upper left corner.



3. To view the list of approved volunteers by opportunity, click the drop-down menu and select the desired opportunity.



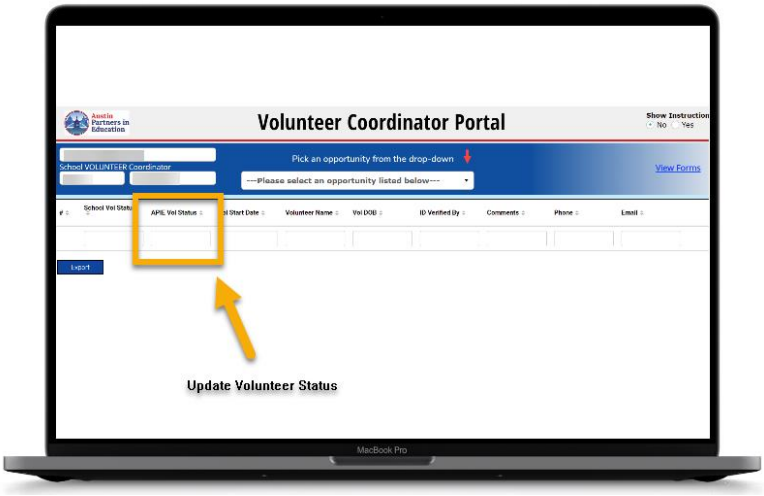
4. Coordinators can use the comment box to document information. If coordinators have any concerns that require immediate attention, please email or call APIE.



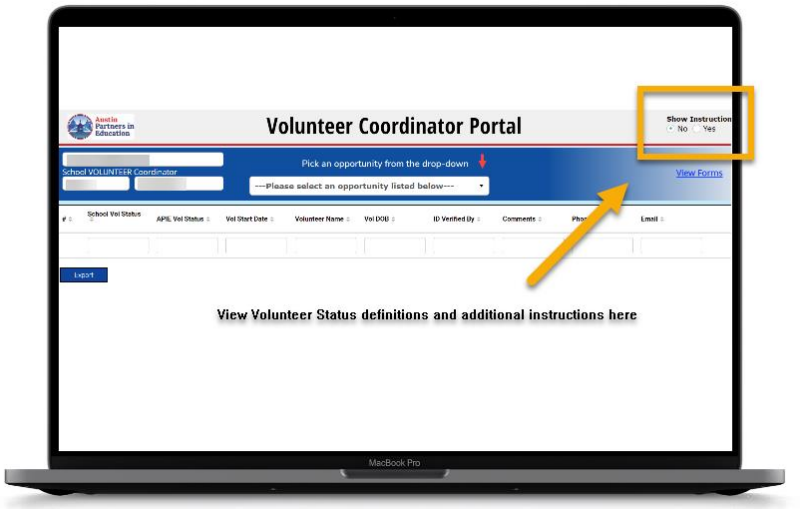
5. When a new volunteer shows up on your portal, you will need to contact them. Once they have been contacted, update their volunteer status in the left-hand "School Reported Status" box. There are 6 status options:

- If you are working on placing a volunteer, mark their status as "**In Process**."
- Once a volunteer is officially assigned to a volunteer opportunity, mark them as "**Placed**."

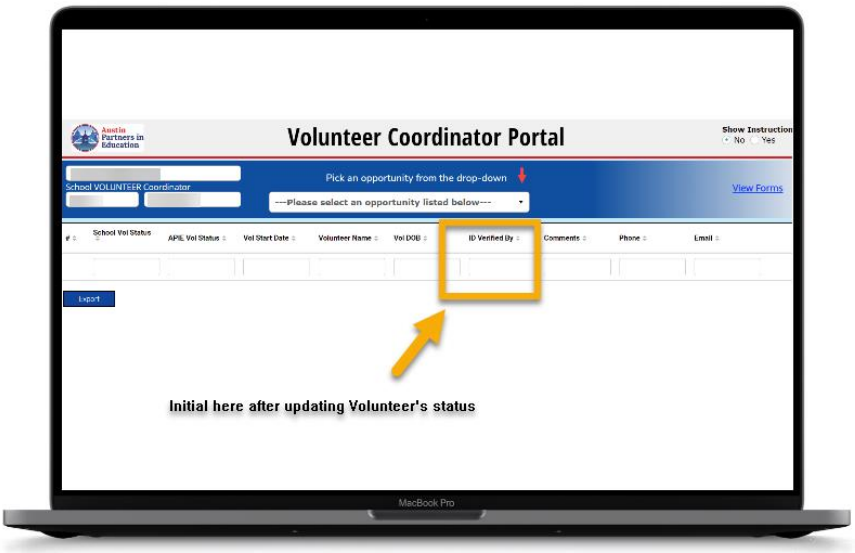
- If a volunteer doesn't respond or has changed their mind about volunteering, mark them as "**Never Started**."
- If a volunteer signed up for the wrong opportunity and needs to be placed in another volunteer opportunity instead, mark them as "**Switched**."
- If a volunteer starts an opportunity but then quits before the end of the school year, mark them as "**Dropped**."
- At the end of the year, switch all remaining "Placed" volunteers to "**Completed Commitment**."



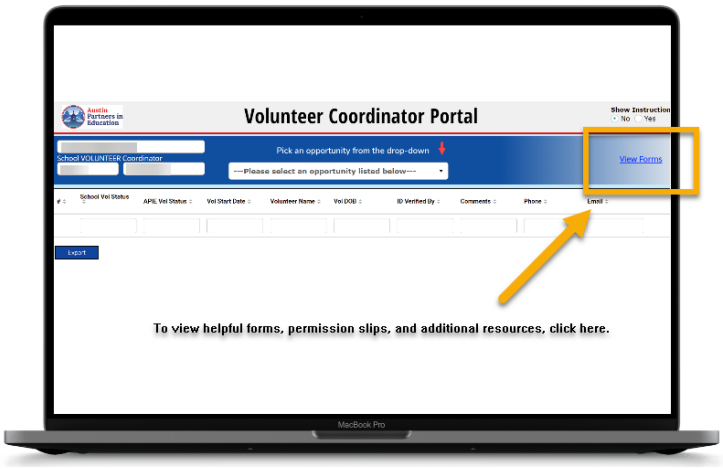
The list of Volunteer Statuses, along with other helpful instructions, can be under “Show Instructions”.



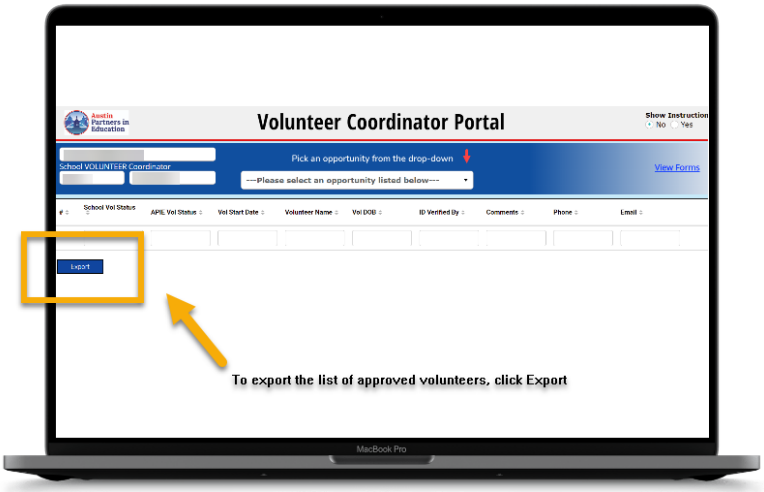
6. When using the drop-down menu to update a volunteer’s status, please be sure to insert your initials in the “ID verified by” box. Without initials, the information on your link will not be saved properly.



7. To view helpful forms, permission slips, the Volunteer Coordinator handbook, and additional resources, click View Forms.



8. To export the list of approved volunteers, click the blue Export button.



Volunteer Sign-In

Every volunteer at your campus will sign in at the front office, usually using the RAPTOR system. Remember, RAPTOR only checks for sexual offenders but does not run a full background check. Your school may also choose to have a sign-in book for volunteers.

Volunteer Appreciation

Always be sure to greet your volunteers and show your appreciation for them throughout the year. Our schools wouldn't be the same without them. A shout-out at a PTA meeting, bookmarks made by students, a donut brunch for volunteers in the library once a semester – these small acts of recognition can go a long way! Contact APIE if you need help with other volunteer appreciation ideas.