



BACKGROUND SCREENING SUGGESTIONS

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) Background Check Unit (BCU) is comprised of analysts trained to review criminal history records based on a set of established criteria. NCMEC provides fitness determinations based solely on fingerprint-derived criminal history records furnished by the FBI. If your organization chooses to review criminal justice records independently, we strongly recommend that you limit access to staff trained in the analysis and interpretation of criminal justice records. The following suggestions are not intended to constitute legal advice; your organization should consult legal counsel specializing in employment law prior to implementing your background check policy.

A background check, fingerprint-based or name-based, may potentially disclose past criminal arrests and convictions. The background check is just one element of the screening process, which should also include an initial interview, subsequent interviews, reference checks and any additional hiring procedures that your organization employs. This compilation of procedures allows for a more informed decision as to whether an applicant is well-suited for the organization. It may be beneficial to review other hiring practices to identify those most suitable for your organization. Background screening may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. It is recommended to designate a person or team of individuals in your organization to be responsible for receiving, reviewing, and acting on background screening information. This person or team of individuals should maintain a high level of confidentiality.
2. It is recommended that the organizations establish assessment criteria defining what shall constitute automatic disqualifiers, and make these criteria known to the applicant. Organizations may wish to consider including the criteria noted below in their screening policy as factors that might automatically disqualify an applicant from affiliation with the organization (this list is not exhaustive; an organization may wish to consider additional factors prior to making a final hiring decision):
 - Failure to complete the screening process;
 - Past history of sexual victimization of children (regardless of whether the individual subsequently completed therapy);
 - Conviction for any crime in which children were involved (regardless of successful completion of probation or incarceration);
 - History of violence or any sexually exploitative behavior including acts against adults;

- Termination from a paid or volunteer position as the direct result of misconduct with a child; lying about criminal history.
3. It is recommended that the organizations tailor criteria to their particular needs. An organization may elect not to affiliate with an individual with a criminal record; alternatively an organization may elect to consider the factors surrounding the conviction (for example, the length of time that has passed since the last conviction). Each applicant should be considered unique and all hiring decisions should be based upon a complete review of the candidate's qualifications and characteristics.
 4. Keep in mind that a nationwide check is the most comprehensive; if a nationwide check is not available to you, you should perform a check on *all* states the applicant previously resided in. Depending upon the sensitivity of the position, additional fitness checks may be appropriate.
 5. Your organization should consistently apply its policies and procedures.
 6. Every effort should be made to verify the applicant is who they say they are to help reduce the possibility of finding someone who is using a false name, DOB, or SSN. Look for inconsistencies in the written application and interviews.
 7. Check personal and professional references, interview neighbors, and look into the applicant's volunteer history.
 8. Look for red flags such as excessive or unnatural interest in children's activities, interest in particular age groups or sex of children, and/or unwillingness to submit to a background check.
 9. You may want to observe the applicant's interaction with children in the environment.
 10. Your organization may wish to make the applicant aware that your organization is especially mindful of concerns regarding child sexual abuse within youth-serving organizations and that your organization is proactive in taking appropriate measures to protect children. Consider organizing training for volunteers/employees on identifying signs of child sexual abuse.