



Washington Rural Counties Insurance Program

Best Practices—Background Checks and the Hiring Process

Risk Alert
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www.wrcip.us

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding this risk alert, please contact your local broker, or your Clear Risk Solutions Risk Manager directly at 800.407.2027.

Properly screening new applicants to your organization is a crucial factor in protecting children, individuals with disabilities, and vulnerable adults. Thorough background checks eliminate individuals who should not be hired or allowed to volunteer for certain organizations. It is the first and best opportunity to prevent criminal activity within your organization or business.

Criminal history checks should be performed after a conditional offer of employment has been made and prior to the hire date. If an applicant has previously lived in another state, you should conduct a National Criminal History check rather than a WATCH or Washington State check. Investigating just within our state may not provide a complete picture of their criminal history.

Performing comprehensive reference checks on the applicant or volunteers is equally important since a criminal history check reveals nothing about candidates with clean records. Checking both employer and personal references will often produce information that will help you understand what kind of person the candidate is.

Hiring Process Tips:

- Reference checks are a must. If the candidate cannot provide recent references, or if their reference refuses to cooperate, then give preference to those whose references check out positive.
- If the references refuse to cooperate then ask the applicant for other references. It is important to find past employers that can state the applicant is safe and an asset.
- Question personal references closely to determine that the reference worked with the applicant in the manner that was described to you. Personal references may also be able to direct you to others with information that may be of interest to you in your investigation.
- Do a Google search of the candidate. There may be blogs or other writings by or about the candidate that will shed more light on their personality.
- Check social media websites such as Facebook. How a candidate describes themselves outside of the hiring process can be very helpful.
- Verify their educational background to ensure they have obtained the degrees or achievements they have listed.
- If you find that an applicant has been untruthful in their written application, move on to the next candidate or volunteer.
- Follow the EEOC's Enforcement Guidelines on Arrest and Conviction information at https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm

Numerous articles and resources are available to all members at My Risk Solutions. You may also contact the WRCIP Pre-Litigation Program to ask questions about proper hiring guidelines and background checks at (800) 407-2027. Resources from My Risk Solutions.

Administered by:

