



Considerations for Screening Employed and Volunteer Staff

The screening of employed and volunteer staff is a critical process in an effective [youth protection program](#). All employees and any volunteers working with youth should be thoroughly screened using the strategies listed below. The entire screening process should be thoroughly documented in the staff member's personnel file.

Applications:

A written application form should include at least the following:

- Name, address and contact information
- Work history, volunteer experience, and education
- Any criminal conviction information
- Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) compliant release
- [Youth Protection policy](#) and screening statement
- References (at least three (3), see more below)
- Signature

Background Checks:

Background screening is an important strategy that can be utilized to assist in the screening of potential staff. Many jurisdictions require state background screening for licensed (or regulated) programs such as childcare and camps. Organizations should include additional checks in their screening process to ensure that all staff is properly screened. State checks are usually not sufficient because they generally do not review information from outside the state and often do not return information in a timely manner. All employed and volunteer staff should have the following background checks performed in addition to any required checks:

- A Social Security number verification; including address trace
- Electronic background check provided by a reputable vendor
- Web-search that includes at least two (2) sites such as a search engine (Google, Yahoo) and a social networking site (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Web-search of national sexual predator [Website](#)

Interviewing:

Personal interviews by at least two (2) representatives of the organization are an effective strategy in the screening of prospective employed and volunteer staff members. Interview questions should be open-ended to allow candidates to provide input. Questions should be consistent for all candidates and documented with response notes on a form identified by the organization. Interview practices should also include:

- Review of [youth protection code of conduct](#)
- Review of position description
- Additional group interviews and program observation when appropriate

References:

Conducting reference checks and verification for application information is another critical strategy in the screening process. Each applicant should have a minimum of three (3) references verified in writing by the organization. Current “Best Practices” for youth-serving organizations suggest that at least one (1) of these references should be a family member. Reference verification should be documented in a consistent manner through the use of a [form](#) that includes all pertinent information and a listing of questions to be asked. Reference checking should include the following practices:

- Verification for any youth-related experience listed on application or identified during interview
- Verification (by organization) of any written references through a confirmation call
- Signature of person performing check on behalf of the organization (include date)

The screening process is a critical component of a [comprehensive youth protection program](#) for organizations. This program should include a written (Board adopted) [youth protection policy](#), thorough screening practices, training, supervision and communication.

More information about youth protection and abuse prevention is available from the [Online Resource Library](#).