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SUBJECT BACKGROUND AND REFERENCE CHECKS		APPROVED PAUL BIANE Chair, Board of Supervisors	

PURPOSE

To establish procedures for conducting pre-employment background and reference checking on all potential new hires (including new contract and extra help employees) and employees considered for promotion to administrative, professional, supervisory, or management positions, including those in the Unclassified Service. This policy also provides for the consistent application and utilization of background and reference checks countywide.

Background and reference checks are used to verify information provided by the applicant and to obtain additional information (i.e., a criminal record, work experience/history, education, licensure, and/or driving record) to determine suitability for the position for which they are being considered.

DEPARTMENTS AFFECTED

All County groups and departments

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the County of San Bernardino to conduct pre-employment and pre-appointment reference and background checks on all potential new hires (including new contract employees) and specified promotional candidates prior to hire.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

1. The Human Resources Department, Employment Division is responsible for the competitive selection of vendors to conduct background and pre-employment reference checks as deemed necessary.
2. Appointing authorities are responsible for the selection of individuals who will promote and further the organizational mission. To that end, unless as otherwise prohibited by law, appropriate background checks are required for all new hires and promotional applicants to assure the selection of individuals who are well qualified and suitable for County employment. Please refer to attached guidelines.
3. The Human Resources Department, Employee Relations Division, is responsible for advising appointing authorities on the conduct of background and reference checks, as well as the overall administration of this policy.
4. At the time of the job offer, the hiring department must inform the candidate that the offer is contingent upon successful completion of a pre-employment background and reference checks. Once the conditional offer has been made, but prior to any pre-employment medical examination, the hiring department must provide the candidate an authorization to release information and personal history form provided by selected background company.
5. Candidate(s) for positions shall be subject to the following checks, unless otherwise prohibited by law. Departments that perform background and reference checks that exceed the areas listed may follow their own established procedures. Examples include checks in the Sheriff's and Probation Departments, and Arrowhead Regional Medical Center.
 - a. Criminal Courts check – in addition to fingerprinting through Department of Justice
 - b. Driver History (if driving a vehicle or County equipment will be required)
 - c. Social Security Number Verification

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- d. Address Verification
- e. Employment History Verification
- f. Reference Checks
- g. Education Verification (If required for the position)
- h. License or Certification (If required for the position)

Positions responsible for, or required to perform fiscal transactions, and positions with fiscal and/or budgetary responsibilities shall be subject to the following additional checks of their credit history:

- a. Bankruptcies and Notices of Default
 - b. Civil Court Judgments
 - c. County, State, Federal Tax Liens
 - d. Credit check
6. For positions at Department Head level or higher, candidate(s) shall be subject to the checks identified above and, in addition, to face-to-face background and reference check interviews conducted by a third party vendor.
7. Background and reference checks and fingerprint reports reflecting any convictions or history discrepancies, are to be reviewed by the assigned Human Resources Officer to determine suitability for hire or promotion. Any concerns should be discussed with the appointing authority.
8. Once a determination is made that a candidate is suitable for hire or promotion, and clearance of all other conditions have been obtained, the candidate may be scheduled for a physical examination if required.
9. All records, including consumer credit reports/consumer reports and/or an investigative consumer report provided by third party vendors, shall be provided to candidates pursuant to applicable Federal and State laws.
10. All background and reference check results shall be maintained by the appointing authority in confidential files, separate from employee personnel files.
11. Reference checks of candidates for internal promotion, transfer, or demotion within the County will only be conducted by authorized department representatives.

Attachment: Background Check Guidelines