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INSURANCE GROUP

Loss Control

Hiring and Onboarding

Hiring, Onboarding, and Engaging

The staff and volunteers within your organization are the very face of your organization to the communities you serve. Without quality ambassadors of your mission, you risk not serving all within your communities. Your talent is the heartbeat of your organization and selecting the very best talent is critical to protecting your mission daily. Step 1 in creating a culture of safety is selecting the very best talent you can and retaining that talent for as long as possible.

In today's world, no doubt finding the right talent is a significant challenge. Public Sector, Private Sector, and the Nonprofit Sector are all competing against one another to hire talent from a shrinking talent pool. As more senior talent transitions towards retirement, there isn't enough talent feeding into the pool to cover the loss. The American workforce is in a talent deficit that is likely to last for quite some time. Finding quality staff and volunteers is difficult, but not impossible.

Screening & Selection

How well you screen and select staff/volunteers is critical because screening & selection controls "who" has access to the participants you serve. Yet, how often do we feel like there is never enough time to do a good job at truly screening applicants? We might even feel as though the "right People" just aren't out there. Perhaps part of the solution to this problem is to do as much as we can to help ourselves out by implementing effective time management resources in your applicant decision-making process? Review the matrix below, and then connect the phrase to a number from 1 to 7 (1 being highest and 7 being the lowest) in order to indicate which are most beneficial to your organization needs.

Hierarchy of Health and Safety Controls	
1	Consider your time valuable.
2	Place responsibility on the applicant during the early stages of the screening process.
3	Save time-and effort-intensive tasks for the later stages of the screening process.
4	Screen for disqualifiers early in the process.
5	Use the observation of others.
6	Eliminate unfit applicants as soon as possible.
7	Include interim decision points in the application process.

Do more of the items you identified as higher priority and less of the items you identified as lower priority. In addition, consider developing layers to your screening process depending on the position you are hiring and the level of Access, Control, & Privacy this position will have with participants. Spend more time screening those with high levels of Access, Control, & Privacy and less time on those with low levels.

Most screening & selection problems are around:

- Momentum Hiring – Hiring rapidly when ramping up for an event and/or season.

- Data gathered during the screening process is not shared & used collectively.

- There is only one set of eyes & ears screening applicants and there is no incorporation of other perspectives.

Applications

Because most offenders do not have criminal records, we must develop other ways of screening in addition to the criminal background check. One such way is to search for "Red Flags " during the screening & selection process, as well as throughout the entire organization. *It is important to **NOTE**, that, just because a Red Flag is present doesn't mean that an individual is an offender. Red Flags, by themselves, do not necessarily mean that a specific person will abuse another person. Rather, "Red Flags* 🚩 *" are something that should be noticed and considered in total. Certainly, the more "Red Flags" noticed does indicate a less likely hiring preference.*

Decide who should be screened and how?

Here are some factors to consider:

- Frequency (How frequently will the position interact with a child?)

- Duration (How long will the position interact with a child?)

- Privacy (How much privacy will the position be given with a child?)

- Type of Relationship (Mentoring versus General)

Positions with the highest levels of Frequency, Duration, Privacy, and Relational Involvement should receive the most stringent screening because they will be given the highest levels of interaction with the children. Positions with the lowest levels of these criteria can receive lower screening measures in order to save time, because interaction with children may be low or not exist at all.

Best Practices for Effective Application Screening

Establishing methods for efficient screening of applications can also help to save valuable time. Consider the following factors:

- Create an application that allows hiring managers to quickly assess for red flags.

- Proactively identify red flags in the application.

- Notify the interviewer of all red flags so they can follow-up with the applicant during the interview.

- As your review the application, communicate a zero tolerance for abuse.

Examples of Red Flags 🚩 for Applications

- Application has gaps in dates for employment, education of residence.
- Application includes conflicting or incorrect information.
- Application has omitted on incomplete information.
- The applicant has an unstable work history.
- The applicant provides vague reasons for leaving previous jobs.
- The applicant is unwilling to use former supervisors as references.
- The applicant is overeducated or overqualified for this or other positions with children.
- The applicant is moving to a lesser-paying job.
- The applicant shows a pattern of work and volunteer positions with the same type of children.
- The work pattern shows patterns of problems with authority.
- The applicant found out about the position just by "dropping in" on the program.
- The applicant describes children as helpless, vulnerable or perfect.

Interview Process

Set the Right Tone

It is important to establish the correct tone for the interview process. This will help to make the interview efficient and less of a time commitment.

Start by:

- Create a sense of privacy.
- Minimize barriers.
- Use an open communication style.
- Create an environment that encourages honesty.
- Decrease the consequences of telling the truth.

Encourage Applicants to Self-Select Out

Inform applicants that:

- You take abuse seriously.
- You are screening specifically to ensure the safety of your program participants.
- Interactions with program participants will be monitored.
- Your organization fully cooperates with authorities in cases of abuse.
- You will require applicants to sign a Code of Conduct.

Behavior-Based Interview Questions

It is very important to use the right type of questions within the interview in order to get the critical information you need about the applicant. Remember, most offenders have no criminal records and can be quite good at manipulation and deceit. "Leading" or "Dead end" questions might not be able to tell you enough about the person you are interviewing. Remember that:

• The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.

• To learn about past behavior, you need to draw out examples in these areas:

   ▪ Skills,

   ▪ Work habits, and

   ▪ Red flag behaviors.

When interviewing with behavior-based questions, it is important to assess for the following qualities:

• Trainability

• Policy Adherence

• Patience

• Supportiveness

• Use of Boundaries

• Use of Good Judgement

*Remember that certain roles need certain knowledge and skill sets.

Examples of Behavioral Interview Questions

• Why are you interested in this position?

• With what group of program participants would you prefer to work with? Why?

• Tell me about some of your hobbies or volunteer work.

• Tell me about a time in your life when you had to quickly learn how to do something. What did you have to learn? How did you learn it? How did you use the new information?

• Often in school or work, we're expected to adhere to policies that don't really make sense to us. Tell me about a time when you had to stick to a rule, even though it didn't seem reasonable. How did you handle the situation?

• Give me an example of a time when a child or vulnerable adult really tried your patience. Specifically, tell me what happened. How did you respond to the situation?

• Describe the two most frustrating situations you have ever had to deal with involving (children, youth, vulnerable adults) and how you handled them.

• Have you ever abused or molested a (child youth, vulnerable adults)? Have you ever been accused of abusing or molesting a child?

• Describe a time when you were personally supportive and reassuring to a person who needed a friend. How did you know that person was in need? How did you show your support?

• Tell me about a time when someone commended you for your good judgement and common sense. What was the situation and how did you handle it?

Red Flags for Interviews

- Defensive/Angry responses.
- Patterns of gaining access to consumers.
- Themes or preferences for particular consumers.
- Found out about the position without clear connection of "dropped in."
- Perception that consumers are "helpless" or "vulnerable."
- Patterns consistent with high-risk characteristics.
- Evasive responses.

Reference Checks

It is important that you perform checks on both Professional and Personal references provided by the applicant. This is because a person will likely act differently at work and in their personal lives and can often separate the two. Red flag behaviors can exist in both and observations made by others are often the only way you will be able to learn about them.

Here are some best practices for conducting reference checks:

Before Reference Checks

- Ensure you receive the right "type" of references.
- Review the list of references with the applicant.
- Make sure the list contains accurate phone numbers and/or email addresses.
- Inform the applicant that they are responsible for making sure references are willing to talk to you.
- Give applicant a deadline for notifying references.

During Reference Checks:

- Document the responses. Use a standard reference form for each call, but be sure to modify questions so that you can learn about the specific experiences the reference has had with the applicant.
- Be friendly and always treat the references with respect. They will feel more comfortable in the hands of a professional.
- Take notes, and write short quotes to prompt your memory.

After Reference Checks

- Review and elaborate upon your notes immediately after the call.
- Note areas of concern or questions to be clarified with other references and/or the applicant.
- Share information learned with other involved stakeholders in the screening process.

Sample Questions to Ask Professional References

- We are looking for someone who will adhere to standard policies of our organization. How would you rate this person's ability to follow policies and procedures?
- How would you rate this person's ability to relate to (children, youth, vulnerable adults)?
- Can you give me an example of how the applicant relates to (children, youth, vulnerable adults)?
- In what types of situations have you observed this person not working well with (children, youth, vulnerable adults) (becoming frustrated, angry, resentful or nonproductive)?
- How would you rate this person's ability to maintain appropriate boundaries with (children, youth, vulnerable adults)?
- How would you rate this person's ability to use good judgement in stressful conditions?
- Tell me about any reason that you aware of why we should not allow this person to work with the (children, youth, vulnerable adults) we serve?

Sample Questions to Ask Personal References

- How long have you known this person?
- What is your relationship to this person?
- How would you rate this person's ability to work with and relate to (children, youth, vulnerable adults)?
- Can you give me an example of how this person relates to (children, youth, vulnerable adults)?
- How would you rate this person's ability to be patient and stay calm?
- Have you ever known this person to use harsh or abusive discipline with a (child, youth, vulnerable adult)?
- Would you be comfortable placing one of your own loved ones in the care of this person? Why or why not?
- What are this person's hobbies and recreational activities?
- How would you rate this person's ability to relate to adults?
- How would you rate this person's ability to be genuinely supportive and understanding to a person in need?
- How would you rate this person's ability to maintain appropriate boundaries with (children, youth, vulnerable adults?

Red Flags for Reference Checks

- Reluctant references.
- Reference does not know the applicant well.
- No references provided from recent position.
- Deceptive responses or refusal to answer.
- Reference responses differ from the applicant's account.
- Characteristics associated with adults who abuse.
- Would not rehire the applicant.
- Not informed they would be used as a reference.
- References that cannot be contacted.
- References reported specific concerns about the applicant.
- References refused to answer specific questions.
- References have short-term relationships with the applicant.

General Red Flag Characteristics

- Social Isolation of difficulty interacting with adults.

- Uses excessive physical affection, particularly tickling or wrestling.

- Difficulty working as a team player or working with authority figures.

- Allows children/youth to get away with things their parents/guardians would not approve of.

- Fails to set limits with children.

- Having numerous positions that relate to the same type of children.

- Using poor judgement with children.

- Has difficulty managing stress and/or handling stressful situations.

- Presents a poor role model for children/youth.

- Uses harsh forms of discipline.

- Excessively involved with children/youth.

- Gives gifts to children/youth.

Background Checks

If most offenders do not have a criminal record, why do them? We still need to do them as part of our overall effort to provide a Safe Environment:

- Of over 11 million arrests in the US in 2013, nearly 500,000 were for violent crime. Nationwide, law enforcement made an estimated 10,085,207 arrests in 2019. Of these arrests, 495,871 were for violent crimes according to the 2019 FBI UCR Program.

- 6% of criminal background checks reveal a criminal record within the last 7 years – 24% of those had more than one.

- 46% of employment, education, and reference checks showed a discrepancy between applicant provided and employer reported information.

- 6% had criminal records per 2011 ADP Screening Index.

Background checks still show criminal backgrounds for some. Just by simply conducting them, you can deter potential offenders from even applying.

Facts about Background Checks:

- The majority of criminal records originate – and are most accurate – at the **local county level**.

- There is no perfect criminal records search. As a result, it is "Best Practice" that your background check process include multiple types of searches and sources.

- The "type" of search matters because of the information it provides.
  - Types of Searches Include:
    - Social Security Number Trace
    - **Individual County Criminal Records Search**
    - Single-State Criminal Records Search
    - Multi-State Criminal Records Search
    - National Sex Offender Registry Search
    - International Criminal Records Search

- ➤ Credit Checks
- ➤ Motor Vehicle Records Search
- ➤ Professional License or Education Verification
- ➤ Employment Verification
- ➤ Personal & Professional Reference Checks
- ➤ Federal Criminal and/or Civil Search
- ➤ **County Civil Records Search**

- There is no such thing as a "national" commercial criminal records search. This is because, at the national level, the various databases used to store histories are not connected. As a result, the national search will almost always be incomplete.

- The sources of the data matter as much as the type of search itself. If the data source isn't comprehensive, the search could be worthless. The adage of "You Pay for What You Get" is true here.

  - Examples of data sources includes:

    - ➤ County Court Records *(Some counties do not have computerized records, meaning someone must physically retrieve the paper documents in order to perform the search. These types of situations will always be more expensive and are often overlooked due to cost, however these data sources can often be the very best source of criminal history money can buy.)*
    - ➤ State Record Repositories
    - ➤ Sex Offender Records
    - ➤ Administrative Office of the Courts
    - ➤ Department of Public Safety
    - ➤ Department of Corrections/Criminal Justice
    - ➤ State Police Agencies
    - ➤ Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon
    - ➤ Various State Registries (Abuse, Drug, and Violent Crimes)
    - ➤ Various National Security Databases (FBI Most Wanted, Interpol Most Wanted, Terrorist Watchlists, etc.)
    - ➤ Proprietary Databases

Here are some Best Practices for background checks.

- Types of searches should your organization consider:

    - Multi-State Criminal Background Check

    - National Sex Offender Registry Check

    - Social Security Number Trace

    - County Criminal Records Search (All counties where the subject has lived, worked, or attended school within the last 7 to 10 years.)

- How often should your organization conduct checks:

    - Continuous employees & volunteers: Every 2 yrs.

    - Seasonal employees & volunteers: Annually.

Important Considerations on FBI Fingerprinting

- Access to fingerprint data is restricted.

- The process is usually costly and cumbersome.

- Results can often take many weeks to come back and can be confusing and incomplete when they do.

- States have self-reported that disposition information is missing from the records that they report to the federal government. You may have to conduct independent research to know if someone was actually found guilty of a crime.

- "Cite & Release" policies within law enforcement can result in incomplete criminal records.

- Fingerprinting only provides "felony" criminal data. Misdemeanors are subject to local police agencies interpretation and policies.

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