


Description:		BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY	Policy Number: 62-70	
	WINNEBAGO COUNTY		Revision Date: 4/24/14	
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I. POLICY

In the interests of providing safe and effective services to the citizens of Winnebago County in a cost effective manner, Winnebago County believes that hiring qualified individuals to fill positions contributes to those goals. Background checks serve as an important part of the selection process. Information obtained through the background check process is collected as a means of promoting safe and efficient services for the citizens as well as assuring an appropriate working environment for current and future employees. Background checks also assist the County in obtaining additional applicant-related information that helps in determining the applicants' overall employability and assists in assuring the protection of people, property/assets and information.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to every employee and candidate for employment of Winnebago County, including elected officials if so adopted. Provided, however, that if there are provisions in a collective bargaining agreement that conflict with the provisions of this policy as applied to an employee subject to that agreement, the agreement shall control.

III. GUIDELINES

A. Notice


Written notification of the requirement to successfully complete a background check will be given through advertisements and/or at the time of application.

B. Processing of Background Checks

Background checks will be initiated through the Human Resources Department. Authorized initiators of background checks in the Human Resources Office may initiate such checks only after receiving a completed and signed Authorization for Pre-Employment Background Check form from the employee and/or applicant.

C. Types of Background Checks

Depending upon the requirements of the position, an applicant or employee may be subjected to a background check that includes, but is not limited to, any or all of the following: (a) criminal background check; (b) credit check (conducted in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and applicable Illinois law); (c) driver record

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check; (d) credentials checks for licensure, degree attainment and credentials verification; (e) verification of the authenticity of social security number information; (f) review of an individual’s character, general reputation, personal characteristics, etc.

The type(s) of background checks to be conducted shall be determined by Winnebago County in light of the responsibilities of the position for which the applicant and/or employee is being considered, in Winnebago County’s discretion, and to the extent allowed by applicable law.


The background check must be completed before employment begins, except as otherwise provided below. Any offers made before a background check has been completed shall be expressly conditioned upon successful completion of the background check. Employment may begin prior to the completion of the background check only as a conditional offer of employment and when the hiring department establishes to the satisfaction of Human Resources that there is a compelling need. In such instances, Human Resources will provide the hiring department with conditional hiring language.

Conditional offers of employment will be withdrawn if the results of the background check are deemed to disqualify the applicant/employee from the position.

D. Results of Background Check

If a potentially unacceptable record is revealed as a result of the background check, a review of the potentially unacceptable background check results will be coordinated by Human Resources which, along with the hiring department, legal counsel, and other appropriate input, will determine whether the background check results will disqualify the applicant and/or employee from the involved position.

In considering a potentially unacceptable background check, the factors reviewed will include, but may not be limited to, the following: (a) the type of information, the number of offenses or misconduct and the circumstances of each; (b) the period of time that has passed between the incidents involved in the information and the submission of the application for employment; (c) other employment and applicable personal information; (d) evidence of the applicant’s rehabilitation efforts (if any); (e) the severity of the offense or misconduct; and (f) the relevance of the information to the responsibilities of the involved position.

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To the extent required by the Fair Federal Reporting Act or other applicable law, applicants will be informed, in writing, if the information is being used to exclude them from employment and will be provided with a copy of a notice of adverse information. The applicant will be given an opportunity to respond in keeping with applicable law. Upon conclusion of the review, written notice will be sent to the candidate regarding Winnebago County's decision on eligibility for the position.

All background check results will be kept confidential and will be maintained by Human Resources. That information will be disclosed only to authorized employees who have a need to know that information in the performance of their job assignments.

An applicant's/employee's failure to disclose criminal convictions or other information requested during the application process; failure to provide truthful answers in response to information requests; and/or omission of information that is appropriate for disclosure in response to such requests may result in disqualification from employment or in the termination of employment.

Winnebago County shall be responsible for the costs associated with conducting background checks conducted pursuant to this policy.