

## **Background Checks**

**NOTE:** The website URL for **Workday reference guides** that are referenced in this section is:  
<https://jira.esg.wsu.edu/plugins/servlet/desk/portal/91>

### **OVERVIEW**

Employing departments obtain preemployment background checks regarding prospective employees in order to protect the interests of WSU students, employees, and the University. Employing officials (hiring managers) coordinate with Human Resource Services (HRS) to use preemployment background checks to assist in the hiring decision process. The employing official may request verification of employment history, educational credentials, criminal history, and other information related to employment.

### **POLICY**

Employing departments may request background checks when considering individuals for University employment, both paid and volunteer.

Preemployment background checks may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Educational credentials verification
- Employment history verification
- Criminal history record

**NOTE:** A conviction/criminal history record does not necessarily disqualify an individual from employment. The fact of arrest alone does not disqualify an individual from employment. An employing official should consult with HRS prior to making an employment decision based upon a background check.

- Credit history examination (for applicable positions only)
- Professional licenses and certifications verification (for applicable positions only)
- Motor vehicle record (for applicable positions only)

Some University units may have security needs in accordance with controls placed upon materials or information. Such units may require additional preemployment background checks beyond those described above or may implement additional screening tools, in conformance with University policies, or state or federal statutory requirements, policies, procedures, directives, or laws.

## **Background Checks**

### **APPLICABILITY**

#### **Supervision of Children or Vulnerable Adults**

Background checks are *required* for positions with duties involving supervision, care, or treatment of children under 16 years old, vulnerable adults, or individuals with mental illness or developmental disabilities. (RCW 43.43.832)

#### **Supervision of Children or Vulnerable Adults (cont.)**

HRS recommends running a basic or premium background check in addition to the Washington Access to Criminal History (WATCH) background check, particularly if the employee or volunteer will be responsible for overnight supervision of children or vulnerable adults.

Background check guidelines and package definitions and pricing are available on the HRS website:

[hrs.wsu.edu/managers/recruitment-toolkit/background-checks/](https://hrs.wsu.edu/managers/recruitment-toolkit/background-checks/)

#### **Disclosure of Convictions**

Washington State Child and Adult Abuse Information Law requires that employers ask applicants to disclose specific information about any convictions for crimes against persons, crimes relating to financial exploitation, and findings in related actions and proceedings, including certain civil proceedings. Conviction information must be disclosed before an applicant can be considered for employment in any position which may involve unsupervised access to children, developmentally disabled persons, or vulnerable adults as defined by the law. (RCW 43.43.830-.842)

#### **Access to Federal Tax Information**

A background check through the Washington State Patrol criminal identification system and the Federal Bureau of Investigation is *required* for all current and prospective employees and contractors who have access to federal tax information (House Bill 2208).

Background check guidelines and package definitions are available on the HRS website at:

[hrs.wsu.edu/managers/recruitment-toolkit/background-checks/](https://hrs.wsu.edu/managers/recruitment-toolkit/background-checks/)

#### **Motor Vehicle Record**

Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) checks are recommended for positions that require driving.

#### **Finances or Property**

Background checks are *strongly recommended* for positions with duties involving confidential personnel or proprietary business information, accountability for or receipt of University funds, access to master keys, sensitive inventory items, or other items of value. (RCW 43.43.815)

## **Background Checks**

### **Any Position**

Employing officials may request preemployment background checks for any position vacancy prior to beginning the recruitment process or prior to extending an offer of employment.

### **Current Employees**

Employing officials may request background checks on current employees when duties and responsibilities have significantly changed, or when required by law, contract, or agreement. Contact HRS for information.

## **PROCEDURES**

HRS offers a background check service. Contact HRS for details.

### **Language on Postings**

Positions that are or may be subject to a background check should contain the following language on all job postings:

*This position may require a background check, as designated by the department.*

Positions that require a background check (e.g., child care) should contain the following language on all job postings:

*This position has been designated by the department to require a background check.*

### **Recruitment Processes**

Appropriate recruitment processes for the employee type must be followed. HRS oversees the recruitment processes for all employee groups.

Refer to the following *BPPM* sections for employee recruitment and procedures:

- Preemployment Inquiry Guidelines *BPPM* 60.08
- Recruitment and Selection of Faculty Personnel *BPPM* 60.11
- Recruitment and Selection of Administrative Professional Personnel *BPPM* 60.17
- Recruitment and Selection of Classified Positions *BPPM* 60.18
- Temporary Employment Program *BPPM* 60.26
- Temporary Employment Processing *BPPM* 60.27

### **Costs**

The hiring department is responsible for all costs incurred by the background check process.

## **Background Checks**

### *WSU Pullman Campus*

The department creates an internal service delivery or submits an IRI to HRS at the time a position requiring a background check is posted (see the Workday Procurement Internal Service Delivery reference guide and *BPPM 70.05*). The internal service delivery or IRI should include the position number for the position being posted. If more than one position needing a background check is being posted, all position numbers are included.

### *WSU Non-Pullman Locations*

Departments request background checks for finalists before an offer letter is extended. HRS conducts background checks through HireRight and does a WATCH background check through the Washington State Patrol, then notifies the hiring manager of the results.

Requesting departments do not create and internal service delivery or submit an IRI to HRS. The expense for a HireRight background check is transferred to the appropriate department's account code when the monthly invoice is processed.

The expense for a WATCH background check is transferred to the appropriate department's account when the purchasing card used for the transaction is reconciled each month.

## **HRS Responsibilities**

When the hiring department uses the HRS background check process, HRS is responsible for the following:

- Advising the employing official regarding the applicability of background check components and the background check process.
- Obtaining, reporting, and maintaining background check information.
- Receiving written consent from the applicant prior to conducting the background check. (NOTE: For certain positions by law and for any position for which a background check is a condition of employment, failure to consent to a background check results in removal of the applicant from consideration for the position.)
- Notifying applicants of their right to obtain a copy of the background check and to challenge the accuracy contained therein.
- Determining, in consultation with the employing official, whether the results of the background check disqualify the applicant from consideration.

## **Background Checks**

### **Offer of Employment**

An offer of employment should not be extended until the background check process is completed. Employing officials must contact HRS prior to extending any offer that may be contingent upon satisfactory results of a background check.

NOTE: To comply with *RCW 28B.112.080*, hiring departments may not make an offer of employment *until* approved by HRS. See also *BPPM 60.11, 60.17, and 60.18*.

### **Positions With Access to Personally Identifiable Information (PII)**

If a candidate is hired into a position with a security role that has access to personally identifiable information (PII), the hiring department *must* ensure a background check is done and the new employee completes FERPA training.

### **Use of Information**

Background check information is to be used for the purpose of evaluating applicants for employment only and is not to be used in a manner contrary to law or University policy.

### **REVIEW OF DECISION**

An applicant may request a review of the background check decision by contacting HRS.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Along with the *BPPM* sections listed under [Recruitment Processes](#), refer to the HRS website for additional guidelines regarding the recruitment processes for faculty, administrative professional, classified, and temporary/hourly positions:

hrs.wsu.edu