

City of Alexandria Employment Policies & Procedures and Background Check Process

Report and Recommendations of the Human Resources Department

March 21, 2012

Prepared By:
City of Alexandria, Human Resources Department

Cheryl D. Orr, SPHR, IPMA-CP Director, Human Resources
Steve Mason, Assistant Director, Human Resources
Nancy Stephens, PHR, Human Resources Manager II, Human Resources



Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary	2
II.	Introduction	3
III.	Methodology and Fact-Finding	4
IV.	Recommendations for Improvements.....	4
V.	Reference Checks, Psychological and Physical Examinations	6
VI.	Budget	6
	Addendum A.....	
	Addendum B.....	
	Addendum C.....	
	Addendum D.....	

I. Executive Summary

In January 2012, at the initiation of Cheryl D. Orr, Director of Human Resources, Human Resources, Assistant Director Steve Mason and ER/Talent Management staff were tasked to conduct a thorough review of the City of Alexandria's Employment Policies and Procedures and background check practices utilized throughout City departments. Mr. Mason's Division, Employee Relations & Talent Management, is responsible for the implementation of the City's hiring process. This research was conducted in January and February, with some information collected in Fall 2011 in anticipation of a supplemental request related to this topic for the FY2014 budget process.

Human Resources (HR) staff conducted research to gather information on the various types of background checks currently available through outside vendors, the City's Policy and processes, City department's current background check policies, processes and procedures and vendors in use. And, as a follow-up to this review, HR staff researched HR industry standard best practices and reviewed neighboring Northern Virginia jurisdiction's (Arlington, Fairfax and Prince William Counties) hiring practices for guidance regarding a formalized background check program¹. None of our neighboring jurisdictions have structured background check policies and procedures and are reviewing their processes for formalization.

This report contains Human Resources findings and recommendations for an enhanced background check program. The goal of these enhancements is to implement a comprehensive standardized employment background check process City-wide as a best practice. City management and residents can be confident in the integrity and quality of City hires, and that due diligence is being exercised in all areas of the employment, recruitment and hiring processes.

In keeping with this goal, Human Resources recommends the adoption of a two-level background check system to be used on final candidates selected for hire. The levels will establish basic check requirements for all new City hires and additional checks as required by a specific job.²

¹ A copy of the research findings from comparator jurisdictions contacted is attached as Addendum A

² A copy of the proposed two-level background checks is attached as Addendum B

II. Introduction

Recently, the City's hiring practices came under scrutiny as a result of former City employee Timothy Wanamaker's, as well as five other City employees, involvement in activities deemed criminal in nature. All of these incidents occurred within the last five years. In November 2011, Mr. Wanamaker pled guilty to a Federal embezzlement charge associated with public funds he misused while employed with the City of Buffalo, New York. Other recent City employees' involvement in criminal acts have caused questions to what extent does the City conduct background checks on new hires..

City Administrative Regulation (AR) 6-3, Employment Restrictions, requires that an applicant successfully complete a background examination, which can include a criminal history check, education and professional certification verification, credit check and drug testing prior to their employment with the City. Mr. Wanamaker's background was thoroughly reviewed by Waters Consulting, an executive search firm, when an Internet search revealed some questionable issues, while he was employed with the City of Buffalo. The only concern regarding Mr. Wanamaker's previous employment with the City of Buffalo was the amount of travel he conducted as the Director of Economic Development. His expenditure of public funds did not raise concerns during the background investigation. Mr. Wanamaker was under Federal investigation, and therefore information was not available through normal background check procedures. We are confident that the hiring process followed in Mr. Wanamaker's case, was correct and thorough.

Other recent City employees involved in criminal activity were employed by the City for an average of 16 years, therefore, the City would not have been able to predict inappropriate behavior from employees who were tenured employees with the City. Best practices in recruitment and hiring, dictates that the City assure that any applicant to be employed by the City is deemed worthy of becoming an employee of the City and background checks are a means to this end.

HR's review revealed major inconsistencies in how and when departments conduct extensive background checks. For example, extensive background checks are limited to primarily Public Safety positions, positions of trust, such as those in Finance, and positions in the Human Services and Recreation fields, which often are guided by State and Federal laws. Although Public Safety departments conduct nationwide criminal history checks, other City departments receive a Virginia-only criminal history check. Other requests for extensive background checks are made informally and on an ad hoc basis. In a situation involving the potential hire of an executive-level employee, City Departments' request and receive extensive background, criminal record and credit history checks as part of the contract with an executive recruiting firm.

Currently, the City does not have under contract a vendor to conduct an array of background checks. This report presents the recommendations of Human Resources for a comprehensive City-wide background check process.

III. Methodology and Fact-Finding

To determine necessary enhancement and recommendations for the City's background check process, HR staff gathered information on the City's current background check process and potential cost impact for enhancements to the current process. In October 2011, Department HR Liaisons were queried for the average estimated annual costs for their respective departments, for conducting background checks. In January 2012, Department HR Liaisons were again queried regarding the specific types of background checks, processes, and vendors used, as well as any written Departmental policies and procedures in place.

As a follow-up to our internal review, HR staff researched human resources industry standard best practices and reviewed our neighboring Northern Virginia jurisdictions' (Arlington, Fairfax and Prince William Counties) hiring practices for guidance regarding a formalized background check program. None of our neighboring jurisdictions have structured background check policies and procedures and are reviewing their processes for formalization.

IV. Recommendations for Improvements

It is the City's responsibility to know as much as it can about its employees and volunteers, and the most effective method to accomplish this is by conducting extensive background checks and incorporating these additional recommendations into its current hiring practices. Making thorough background checks a part of the City's culture will not only enhance its effectiveness (e.g., through greater productivity and retention), but also its reputation. Checking can assist with loss prevention or prevention efforts by offering a safer, more productive work environment and avoid litigation as a result of negligent hiring.

Based on extensive research, the following recommendations to improve the quality of the hiring process are:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive, two-level background process to be used on final applicants for hire.

The levels will establish background check requirements for all new City hires and additional checks as required by a specific job.

2. Select a Professional Services vendor, through the City's Request for Proposal process, to perform the array of background checks required for all positions City-wide, to be managed by HR.

One professional background screening vendor will offer better management of services and enhance the City's ability to realize improved cost efficiency, consistency, quality of processes including timeliness, accuracy, assure confidentiality and reduce the duplication of efforts of administrative staff across the City. One provider will help to mitigate the risk of potential damage to the City and assist in maintaining the City's credibility in performing its due diligence and management of the screening process to both inside and outside parties. Experienced vendors often come with significant experience in law enforcement, and often uncover such things as criminal convictions, unpaid child support, and other hidden issues that could influence the hiring decision.

Professional Background Screening Services³ Include:

- Drug Testing
- National Criminal Record Check
- Wants and Warrants Check
- Education /Degree Verification
- Child Abuse/Neglect Registries
- Commercial Driver's License Verification
- Driver's License Review
- Driving Record Review
- Sex Offender Registry Review
- Social Security Validation
- Civil Record Check
- Credit History Review
- I-9 Verification
- Military Record Search
- Psychological Examination
- Physical Examination
- Professional License, Credential & Certification Verification
- Polygraph Examination

³ Descriptions of background screenings is attached as Addendum C

3. Incorporate an search and LexisNexis review (review of candidate exposure to the media/newsprint articles) into the City-wide reference check process.

Internet searches will be conducted internally by the Department as part of their background check process. Human Resources will provide written guidance for using these processes. Once a Department indicates that they would like to conduct a LexisNexis review, a vendor must be utilized. Any information obtained through an Internet search and/or LexisNexis review will be used in conjunction with other background information to facilitate a hiring decision. The information obtained from these type of searches cannot be the sole reason for not hiring an applicant, but will be used to determine if a more thorough check needs to be conducted.

4. Finalize a City Administrative Regulations (AR) on Citywide Employment

Use the Employment Policies and Procedure document, which is currently utilized for providing training to Supervisors and Managers on the City's hiring process. A draft Employment Policy document has been developed during the revision of the current ARs.

5. Provide Funding for Citywide Basic Background Checks (see section VI).

Human Resources will run Basic Background checks on all candidates who are recommended for hiring by Departments.

V. Reference Checks, Psychological and Physical Examinations

Departments will be responsible for conducting personal and professional reference checks unless specifically requested that a contracted company do so. Currently, Inova Alexandria Occupational Health is contracted to conduct physical examinations and drug testing for the City. Public Safety Departments have contracts in place with companies to conduct psychological and polygraph examinations. These contracts will remain in effect.

VI. Budget

Human Resources staff reviewed information provided by City departments and determined that approximately 600 criminal records and background checks are annually conducted City-wide (this does not include sworn personnel for Public Safety departments). Staff then researched the average costs for the types of background screenings recommended in this report.

The below chart indicates the average costs of the services the City will require. These costs will be charged back to the department requesting the services.

Recommended Required Background Screening (BASIC) for All New Hires

- City/County Criminal Search
- National Criminal Record
- Wants and Warrants
- Sex Offender Registry
- E-Verify (Social Security/I-9 Verification)(can be conducted internally)
- Employment Verification (can be conducted internally)
- Reference Checking (can be conducted internally)

Total: \$48.00

Additional Background Screening When Required by Specific Job

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| • Drug Testing | |
| • Education /Degree Verification | \$7.50 |
| • Child Abuse/Neglect Registry | \$7.00 |
| • Driver's License/Record Review (to include CDL when required) | \$12.00 |
| • Civil Record | \$14.00 |
| • Credit History | \$7.00 |
| • Medicare/Medicaid Fraud Database | Free |
| • Military Record | \$7.00 |
| • Professional License & Certification Verification | \$7.50 |
| • Psychological Examination | \$350.00 |
| • Physical Examination | \$675.00 |
| • Polygraph Examination | \$350.00 |

The cost for the City to conduct 600 Basic (includes full-time and part-time staff) required background screenings annually is approximately \$28,800.00. According to the research conducted, the average cost for a complete extensive background screening, not including the costs of a psychological, physical and/or polygraph examinations, is approximately \$98.00 per employee.

Addendum A

**City of Alexandria Northern Virginia Comparator Jurisdictions
Employment Background Check Policies and Processes**

**City-Wide Employment Background Check Requirements
Current Processes and Recommendation for Changes to Incorporate
Best Practices
January 27, 2012**

ADDENDUM A

Comparator Jurisdictions contacted and information received on their background checking policies and processes listed below.

Background Type	City of Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Prince William County
Drug Testing	Yes CDL Operator positions "Positions of Trust" Positions with legal or accreditation requirements	Yes CDL Operator positions	Yes CDL Operator positions and all Public Safety positions	Yes CDL Operator positions
Physical Examinations	Yes Positions demanding considerable physical labor such as CDL Operators, trade/labor, public safety and other positions with legal requirements	Yes Positions demanding considerable physical labor such as CDL operators, trade/labor, and Hazmat (very small group), Police, Fire and Sheriff and other positions with legal requirements	Yes Positions demanding considerable physical labor or exposure to dangerous chemicals such as trade/labor, public safety, nurses, lab techs, and some engineering positions assigned to the Park Authority, Forestry, environmental techs, ecologists, and warehouse workers. Contracted through INOVA Occupational Health	Yes Positions demanding considerable physical labor such as CDL Operators, trade/labor, public safety and other positions with legal requirements Contracted through INOVA Occupational Health
Process/Vendor	Contracted through INOVA Occupational Health, apts. set up by hiring offices, not HR	Contracted through INOVA Occupational Health, apts. set up by hiring offices, not HR	Contracted through INOVA Occupational Health	Contracted through INOVA Occupational Health
Criminal Record Check	Yes "Positions of Trust" processed through Virginia State Police Criminal History Exchange System (reviews State of Virginia occurrences only) Firefighters and Medics conducted by Hughes, Barney Investigations, LLC FBI/Federal Criminal Records Check (fingerprinting): DCHS/MHM RSA: According to State Requirements, positions and processing conducted at department level through Alexandria Police Department,	Yes Conducted on every position FBI/Federal Criminal Records Check (fingerprinting): General positions -fingerprinted – scanned in by HR Analyst. On-sight, forwarded to VA State Police. Reports returned to HR Employee Relations,	Yes Conducted on almost every position Includes volunteers, non-merit positions, Meals on Wheels, part-time temps no benefits. General positions -fingerprinted – scanned in by Security Dept. on-sight, forwarded to VA State Police. Reports returned to HR, Employment Division Chief reviews. Report goes back as far as a person has a record. (Traffic	Yes No standard policy, based on the nature of the position. Plan to centralize and run all checks through HR Fingerprints conducted for community service, therapists, Dept. social services, Public Safety and 911 operators No specific policy for what is

**City-Wide Employment Background Check Requirements
Current Processes and Recommendation for Changes to Incorporate
Best Practices
January 27, 2012**

ADDENDUM A

Background Type	City of Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Prince William County
<p>Criminal Record Check (cont.)</p> <p>Process/Vendor</p>	<p>forwarded by DCHS Human Resources staff to Virginia State Police in Richmond for processing Sheriff & Police: According to written departmental directives. Conducted at department level for all positions including General Salary positions Fire: According to written departmental directives. Conducted at department level for Firefighters and Medics; CJIS Live Scan conducted by HBI Health Department: According to State Requirements for State Positions</p>	<p>Employment Division Chief reviews. Report goes back as far as a person has a record. (Traffic violations come up.) If record, results take 2-3months (sometimes).</p> <p>(If position involves seniors & children) SDS 1st Advantage Via on-line –turnaround time, often 2 days Monthly contract</p> <p>Public Safety and 911 operators-processed at Department level</p>	<p>violations come up.) If record, results take approx.15-18 days.</p> <p>No specific policy. Reviewed on case-by case basis, depends on duties of position, State law applicable, etc. Typically review only 7 yrs., unless law requires otherwise</p> <p>Public Safety-processed through Police Dept./911 Center</p>	<p>acceptable/unacceptable. Reviewed on case-by case basis, depends on duties of position, State law applicable, etc.</p> <p>Public Safety and 911 operators- processed at Department level via State of Virginia</p>
<p>VA State Child Abuse/Neglect Registry Check:</p>	<p>Yes Determined at department level based on State requirements</p>	<p>Yes Determined at department level based on State requirements</p>	<p>Yes Determined at department level based on State requirements</p>	<p>Yes Determined at department level based on State requirements</p>
<p>Polygraph</p> <p>Process/Vendor</p>	<p>Yes Public Safety sworn and General Salary positions: According to written department directives and HR Director approval Processed in Public Safety</p>	<p>Yes Public Safety positions (sworn) None for Crossing Guards</p> <p>Processed in Public Safety</p>	<p>Yes Public Safety positions (sworn) Police Dept. general positions</p> <p>Processed in Public Safety</p>	<p>Yes Public Safety positions (sworn)</p> <p>Processed in Public Safety</p>

**City-Wide Employment Background Check Requirements
Current Processes and Recommendation for Changes to Incorporate
Best Practices
January 27, 2012**

ADDENDUM A

Background Type	City of Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Prince William County
Driving Record	<p>Yes For positions that require a driver's license</p> <p>Conducted at department level Executive level positions conducted through Executive Search Firm(s)</p>	<p>Yes For positions that require a driver's license</p> <p>Conducted via State check, otherwise candidate provides</p>	<p>Yes For those positions that a require driver's license</p> <p>Conducted through Risk Management</p>	<p>Yes All County positions</p> <p>Conducted through Risk Management</p>
Credit Check	<p>Yes Police Department (Police Officers) conducted through Equifax Eport Fire Department (Firefighters and Medics) conducted through HBI Executive level positions conducted through Executive Search Firm(s)</p>	<p>Yes At Department request based on position, if position involves handling money</p>	<p>Yes Directors and Managers with fiduciary responsibility. Budget, tax administration, clerks, any positions/persons who handles money, and anyone who has a P-card. (Fire positions – no)</p> <p>Conducted every 2 yrs. as long as the person is in the position</p>	<p>Yes Based on position, if position involves handling money</p>
Policy Guidance	No written formal Policy	No written formal Policy	No written formal Policy, reviewed and approved on case-by-case basis. It depends on circumstances, seeking good stewards. HR Manager follows up w/ Department Manager	
Process/Vendor		SDS 1st Advantage Checks conducted on-line	Employment Integrity – Review ratio to income, how many times a person has been delinquent, bankruptcies, 30/60/90 days, etc. All reports go to HRD Manager	Checks conducted through Police Department
Education/Degree/Certification/	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**City-Wide Employment Background Check Requirements
 Current Processes and Recommendation for Changes to Incorporate
 Best Practices
 January 27, 2012**

ADDENDUM A

Background Type	City of Alexandria	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Prince William County
Licensure Verification Process/Vendor	No standard City policy requirement to verify degrees, certifications or licenses for all City-wide positions. Conducted at department level according to Department directives and legal mandates with guidance from HR. Executive level positions conducted through Executive Search Firm(s)	For positions that require degrees SDS 1st Advantage Checks conducted on-line	Licenses and certifications checked online with the professional organization or the State. Conducted both at the Department level and sometimes through Employment Integrity	For positions that require certifications/licensures (not verifying degrees) Applicant must provide copies/verification
Psychological Examination Process/Vendor	Yes Public Safety positions Processed in Public Safety by various vendors	Yes Public Safety positions Processed in Public Safety	Yes Public Safety positions Processed in Public Safety	Yes Public Safety positions Processed in Public Safety

Addendum B

Basic Background Check Requirements and Additional Available Tests

Recommended Required Background Screening for All New Hires

- City/County Criminal Search
- National Criminal Record
- Wants and Warrants
- Sex Offender Registry
- E-Verify (Social Security/I-9 Verification)(can be conducted internally)
- Employment Verification (can be conducted internally)
- Reference Checking (can be conducted internally)

Additional Background Screening When Required by Specific Job

- Drug Testing
- Education /Degree Verification
- Child Abuse/Neglect Registry
- Driver's License/Record Review (to include CDL when required)
- Civil Record
- Credit History
- Medicare/Medicaid Fraud Database
- Military Record
- Professional License & Certification Verification
- Psychological Examination
- Physical Examination
- Polygraph Examination

March 21, 2012

Addendum C
Background Screening Descriptions

- Sex Offender Registry Review

This review performs searches at the national or local level to retrieve any record of sexual offense convictions. Information returned may include name, aliases, physical characteristics, date of birth, residential addresses, employers, county/ state of conviction and specific sexual offense.

- Social Security Validation

This tool reveals the state and year a social security number was issued and provides an "Alert" if the SSN is assigned to a deceased person.

- Civil Record Check

A civil records search may identify suits filed by individuals or corporations, including product liability suits, civil rights violations, judgments for non-payment of goods, and litigation related to divorce, marriage, and child custody that the applicant may be subject to. Typically civil record searches are conducted in counties and federal districts where an applicant has resided, worked, or attended school for the past 7 years.

- Credit History Review

Credit history review accesses a national credit bureau repository. Information returned can include public records including bankruptcy proceedings, collection accounts and civil litigation records. Two types of credit history searches are available: a Rental/Tenant Screening Credit Report or a Comprehensive Employment Credit Report.

- I-9 Verification

This search determines employment eligibility of new hires and validity of their social security numbers.

- Medicare/Medicaid Fraud Database (Free)

This search may identify individuals, providers, or organizations that have deliberately deceived others in order to gain some sort of unauthorized benefit or service. Medicare and Medicaid fraud generally involves deliberately billing for services that were not received or billing for a service at a higher rate than normal.

- Military Record Search

Military records are very similar to employment confirmations. Job title, dates of service and type of discharge are confirmed. Many times military service represents a major portion of experience and training and should be examined carefully. A full military history should be required when the discharge is dishonorable.

- Psychological Examination

Psychological tests are written, visual, or verbal evaluations administered to assess the cognitive and emotional functioning of children and adults.

- **Physical Examination**
During a physical examination, a health care provider studies a patient's body to determine the presence or absence of physical problems.
- **Professional License, Credential & Certification Verification**
License, Credential & Certification Verifications are conducted through appropriate state governments or professional associations (i.e. attorney, health care professional, CPA, etc.). The license grantor is asked about the date the license was issued, expiration date, any restrictions attached to the license, and any suspension or revocation.
- **Polygraph Examination**
A polygraph measures and records several physiological indices such as blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and skin conductivity while the subject is asked and answers a series of questions. The belief is that deceptive answers will produce physiological responses that can be differentiated from those associated with non-deceptive answers.

Background Screenings Descriptions

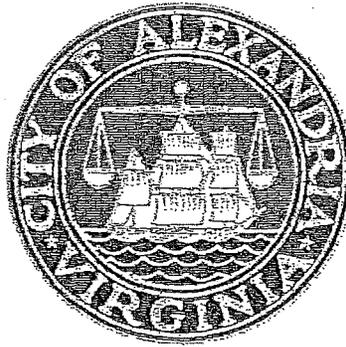
- **Drug Testing**
Drug testing programs are available for pre-employment, random employee screening, post-accident or DOT purposes
- **National Criminal Record Check**
This criminal search utilizes a comprehensive database of multiple criminal record sources, including federal fugitive files, state and county criminal record repositories, prison parole and release files, sex offender data and records from other state agencies. This criminal search includes access to more than 200 million criminal conviction records across the United States.
- **Wants and Warrants Check**
This is a search of the National Crime Information Center database containing individuals with outstanding warrants. The types of warrants retrieved range from misdemeanor warrants for bad checks, traffic violations, failure to appear, and unpaid fines to felony warrants for parole or probation violations, robbery, forgery, kidnapping or murder.
- **Education /Degree Verification**
Inquiries are made directly through the educational institution concerning dates of attendance, date of graduation or award, type of degree and fields of study
- **Child Abuse/Neglect Registry**
A search of various registries
- **Commercial Driver's License Verification**
A physical verification of an applicant's current Commercial Driver's License.
- **Driver's License Review**
A verification of an applicant's current driver's license.
- **Driving Record Review**
A report from a specified state's Department of Motor Vehicles that typically provides a history of the driving record and typically includes date of issue, expiration date, status, infractions and restrictions.

Addendum D

City of Alexandria Employment Policies and Procedures

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
EMPLOYMENT
POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Human Resources Department
Employment & Testing Division
2010



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

I. VACANCY EXISTS

- A. A vacancy is an authorized position without an incumbent employee.
- B. A vacant position may exist in a department because:
 - 1. an employee has been terminated, has transferred, has resigned, or has been promoted or demoted;
 - 2. a new grant has been approved;
 - 3. an additional position has been approved.
- C. The following steps must occur before a newly-established position may be filled.

- 1. For a new position, the department completes a Job Analysis Questionnaire and submits it to the Classification and Compensation Division of Human Resources for review and assignment of classification.

Grant-funded positions do not require any classification action if the positions are already in the pay classification system. A completed requisition is necessary to begin the recruitment process. The "Acknowledgment of Grant - Funded Position" form must be signed by the selected candidate for any grant-funded position.

- 2. The Classification and Compensation staff reviews, evaluates and classifies the position, assigns it to a current classification, or creates a new job class.
- 3. The Director of Human Resources authorizes allocation of a new classification into the City's classification and pay plan.

The position classification review process should take place before the Requisition is submitted to the Employment Division. Any questions concerning these position classification procedures should be referred to the Chief of the Classification and Compensation Division at 703-746-3795.

D Infrequently, a vacant position may be filled by the Director of Human Resources in consultation with one or more department heads. Some examples of these circumstances are:

1. Reinstatement, reassignment, or other placement of an employee as settlement of a grievance or in response to a performance problem;
2. Reorganization of a department, division or section, with mandatory reassignments;
3. Reduction in force (layoffs) in one or more departments;
4. Reasonable accommodation for disabled employees;
5. Inability of an employee to perform a job due to a Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)-related issue.

E. Transfers:

1. Directed Transfers - An employee may be laterally transferred from one position to another within the department in the same classification when such action is directed by the department head.
2. Voluntary Transfers - An employee may be laterally transferred to a position in the same or a different department by forwarding a completed application form to Human Resources during a recruiting period of an existing vacancy.
3. Voluntary Demotions - An employee may be transferred to a position of lower grade in the same or a different department, subject to the current pay policy, by forwarding a completed application form to Human Resources during a recruiting period of an existing vacancy.

II. REQUISITION

Unless the vacancy is filled by one of the Human Resources actions listed above, the following procedures must be followed when filling all vacancies. The Requisition identifies vacancy information and department head approval for recruitment. In order to open the requisition, additional information is needed and should include: written confirmation of the City Manager (Office of Management & Budget) approval, interview questions and answers, testing tools, grading methods, and Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) approved by the Division Chief of Classification and Compensation (if appropriate). The Employment Analyst must approve all interview questions and answers, testing/evaluation tools, and the

evaluation criteria before they are used. Departments are asked to provide a clear written explanation of how a written exercise will be used in the selection process.

Interview questions and evaluation criteria must be received and approved by the Employment Analyst before applicants are referred to the department.

It is preferable to use the position description ("Duties") with the online Requisition as a statement of the essential duties of a position instead of the class specification, since the description outlines the vacancy more explicitly. The position description changes frequently, but the class specification does not. The City has more than 600 job classes and more than 2,000 positions. A position description may identify an unusual working condition such as a distant location, ability to work independently, a night shift, or a special knowledge required which other positions in the same class may not require. The level of minimum requirements for the position may not exceed those identified in the class specification.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, position descriptions advertised by the City should contain only the fundamental duty requirements of the position or the "essential functions" of the position. Essential functions are those duties or requirements of the position which all applicants must be able to perform satisfactorily on a regular basis.

When interview panels are used for the candidate selection process, the hiring department will list the names and identify race and gender of the panel members within the designated area on the Requisition (see page 7). Changes to panels must be reported to the Employment Analyst in writing and approved prior to the interview.

As part of the selection process, some positions require successful completion of pre-employment requirements, e.g. drug testing, medical examinations, and/or criminal background checks. The Employment Analyst will confirm pre-employment requirements. Employment requirements shall be stated on the job vacancy announcement and advertising materials. Hiring is conditional upon the successful completion of all requirements.

Many positions, such as Police Officer, Firefighter, Deputy Sheriff and other classifications in the Medical Groups I and II category require successful completion of a medical examination prior to selection.

For policy requirements and a current list of City positions:

1. Drug Testing - A. R 6-30, Drug & Alcohol Testing
2. Physical Examinations - A.R. 6-6 Pre-Employment, Periodic, and Fitness-For-duty Medical Examinations
3. Criminal Background Checks - City of Alexandria, Employment Division Policies and Procedures, Addendum A

Department Heads may request that a position be added or deleted to a list of the above positions by submitting a written request to the Human Resources Director.

III. RECRUITMENT

A. Internal Recruitment

Regular full-time vacancies are posted as "Promotional Opportunities" for 14 calendar days. Temporary and regular part-time vacancies will not be advertised promotionally. (For Sworn Public Safety positions refer to A.R. 6-26, Public Safety Promotions.)

The hiring department will determine whether the posting is an internal recruitment or open to both internal and external candidates.

The internal posting will be advertised for a total of 14 calendar days (add a day for every holiday that falls during the 14 days). The minimum requirements are taken directly from the Classification Specification. When posting the position, to assure that screening is based upon quantifiable measures, the wording from the classification specification shall be changed to reflect specific years of experience.

NOTE: Some = 1 year, Considerable = 3 years, Extensive = 5 years

The preferred qualifications are developed based on the job description supplied by the hiring department together with the Employment Analyst. As a standard practice, all postings shall list preferred qualifications.

The City's promotional policy states that an employee who is promoted will receive an 8.5% increase plus transition up to the closest step of the new grade, or placed at the minimum of the new grade, whichever is higher. An employee's new promotional salary may not exceed the maximum salary of the new pay grade.

As a standard, applications should be certified within three days of the close date, and no later than 7-10 days after the closing date. For the rare paper application, it will be verified that it is within the announcement deadline. If the internal process does not yield any qualified internal applicants, the Employment Analyst will discuss external recruitment options with the hiring department.

All applications must be received in Human Resources no later than 5:00 p.m. on the close date. Applications will not be accepted after this date and time.

B. Open Recruitment

A "close date" is a date through which all applications received will be accepted and reviewed for referral consideration by the Employment Analyst.

Close dates shall be two (2), three (3), six (6), or, in unusual situations, nine (9) weeks from the initial date of open recruitment. In most cases, two or three weeks will be sufficient, and will serve to expedite the recruitment process. Some circumstances may necessitate a longer period, such as when filling unique or hard-to-fill positions, or when using a specific advertising media with an issue date that calls for more time.

Advertised Salary - Positions will be advertised routinely at the full-salary range, unless otherwise noted by the hiring department on the requisition. All hires at the O-P Step on the salary scale require Human Resources Director approval prior to making the offer to the selected candidate.

Advertising Placement - Position vacancies may be advertised through newspapers, professional publications, websites, and other media when conducting open recruitment. Departments are asked to provide a list of recruitment sources for desired advertising when submitting the Requisition. Ad placement recommendations from the department will be evaluated by staff based upon anticipated media effectiveness, targeted marketing goals, and historical recruiting experience for the position. The hiring department is responsible for all advertising/recruiting expenses incurred. The City reserves the right to use employment agencies.

IV. EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS

- A. All applications received by the close date are reviewed by the Employment Analyst and certified based upon the Minimum Requirements of the position set forth in the Class Specification, as well as the Preferred Qualifications from the Requisition. The Employment Analyst will refer to the department for interview consideration those applicants who are the most-highly qualified within an applicant pool.
- B. Employees applying for City positions are required to complete the standard City application. Employees should not assume that an Employment Analyst will know of their performance and accomplishments. Certification can only be based upon the information provided on the application.
- C. The department is required to consider all the certified applicants. While the departments are required to carefully consider all persons referred, they are not required to interview all applicants referred. If no selection is made, the department may request re-advertising.

V. INTERVIEW

- A. Questions used in employment interviews must be designed to determine an applicants' knowledge, skills, and abilities directly related to the position. The Employment Analyst must review and approve all interview questions and answers, and any testing/evaluation tools used in the selection process.

Interviewers may not ask questions about ancestry, race, political affiliations, marital status, age, religious beliefs, or disabilities. Questions not directly related or appropriate to the position will be eliminated by the Employment Analyst.

Interviews should be scheduled with applicants well in advance and provide clear details to the applicant about the interview process to take place. This will allow an applicant with a qualified disability under the Americans with Disability Act the opportunity to make a request for a reasonable accommodation during their interview (if needed), and the hiring department time to respond to the request.

- B. For department heads, deputy department heads, division chiefs, and other key positions, interview panels are required. For all other City vacancies, interview panels are recommended, but not required. When they are used, panels must have minority and/or female members. The Employment Analyst can recommend additional, potential panel members, as needed, to create diverse and gender-balanced panels for hiring departments.

When selecting a panel, hiring officials are encouraged to include panel members who represent the particular race/ethnic/ gender group that is underutilized in that department.

Panel training should be conducted with all panel members prior to interviews. The Panel Training Guidelines provides pertinent information that panel coordinators should address with their panel members prior to interviews. Panel operations are confidential. Supervisors and employees who serve as interview panel members must be informed that interview panel deliberations and recommendations to the hiring authority (management) are confidential. Panel coordinators must inform each panel member of the confidentiality requirements and have each member sign a Confidentiality Statement before any candidate is interviewed.

- C. Hiring managers must remind each applicant of any pre-employment requirements to include drug testing, criminal background checks, and/or pre-employment physicals.

Criminal Background Checks Interview Requirements:

1. Advise applicants that a criminal record is not an automatic disqualifier, but an offer of employment is conditional until the criminal record is reviewed and found satisfactory.
 2. Question applicants about criminal record information provided on applications.
 3. During an interview, if an applicant reveals a conviction for an adult law violation which was not reported on the application form, the applicant is not eligible for hire.
 4. Provide the Employment Division with a signed and notarized Criminal History Record Request form completed by the selected candidate, once selection has been approved by the Analyst.
 5. Treat criminal record information as confidential information.
- D. Interviews are graded with words such as *Outstanding*, *Very Good*, *Satisfactory*, *Limited*, and *Poor* to describe the candidates' performance on each interview question, and overall performance.

Each panel member must take detailed notes of candidates' responses to each interview question. Candidates should be graded immediately after completing their interview. Panel members initially consider their notes and the answers to each question (silently), and determine a grade for each question and the total interview

score. Following the silent grading, panel members discuss their grades in an effort to achieve consensus scores for each question and for the entire interview. Based on this discussion, it is possible that panel members may change their original scores. Based on the final results of the panel discussion, the panel should place each applicant in one of the following categories - Highly Recommended, Recommended or Not Recommended.

- E. Hiring authorities (interview panels) must present to all applicants interviewing for City positions the list of essential functions and query them on their abilities to perform these functions. After presenting the list of essential functions during the interview, the applicant must be asked: "Can you perform all of the functions of these positions?" If during the interview process, an applicant presents accommodations which would be necessary for him/her to accomplish the essential functions of the position, interviewers should clearly define the accommodation(s) that would be necessary, and make detailed notes of the request (Refer to AR 6-29, Reasonable Accommodation). Notes from the interview regarding accommodation requests should be included as part of the Selection Report (including cost, feasibility, etc.). If the candidate ultimately selected for the position discussed the need for accommodation during the interview process, the Human Resources Department and the hiring department will work together with the applicant to determine reasonable accommodations. Departmental questions regarding reasonable accommodation requests for the Employment process should be directed to the Employment Chief, Human Resources.
- F. Based on the results of the interview process, interview panels recommend to the hiring authority (management) which candidate(s) should be strongly considered for the position. With this recommendation, the hiring manager takes or directs appropriate steps (reference checks, second-round interview, etc.) to make a final decision to select the most-highly qualified candidate(s). Once the pre-offer steps are successfully completed, the hiring manager notifies the Employment Analyst of the selection, initiates an offer of employment letter that indicates salary, start date, and any contingencies required for employment.
- G. It is important to inform the employee/candidate that a reference check will be conducted prior to doing so. As a courtesy, the employee/candidate should have the opportunity to inform current and past employers of the reference check.

When checking references and work history for a current City employee, a department may review an employee's personnel file with prior written approval of the employee. The hiring department shall have the employee sign the Release of Information form, normally during the interview process. The release form may also be used in cases where an outside employer is reluctant to provide a reference without a release.

- H. Departments must retain all interview information for 36 months for future review and possible audit.

VI. SELECTION

To ensure compliance with City selection procedures, a Selection Report must be completed by the hiring department no more than 45 days from the date applications are referred. The Employment Analyst will notify the hiring department of approval once all selection information is reviewed. An online hiring authorization and employment offer letter must be approved by the Employment Analyst before the hiring department officially offers the position to an applicant.

The selection data furnished to the Employment Analyst will include all online updated records pertaining to all referred candidates. The online applicant tracking system provides data categories for candidates to be referred, rejected, interviewed, offered a position, and hired. All referred candidates must have the dispositions updated by the hiring department prior to the Employment Analyst approving a hire within the online system.

Hiring departments will need to use the comments section to describe dispositions. The Selection Report form will become part of the interview documents to be housed in the hiring department. The Selection Report and the online dispositions of candidates will include the job-related reasons for not interviewing or not selecting each referred candidate. Likewise, the candidate to be hired will have comments related to the highly-desirable outcome of the interview process to include specific strengths or skills.

During the initial review of applications, the Employment Analyst will create an Eligible List of certified applicants from which to create a Referred List. The Referred List is sent to the hiring department for determining interviews. The Eligible List is valid for six months and may be used to provide additional applicants to the hiring department, should the filled position become vacant in that time period. Upon request, the Analyst will confirm the Eligibility List is active and assist the department as needed. If a selection is made, the department will forward complete selection information for approval.

Public Safety Eligibility Lists: (Sworn)

Eligibility lists are established for many entry-level and promotional positions within the public safety departments. To fill a vacancy from a current Eligibility List, the department must submit a Requisition Form and a completed Selection Report. The Analyst will confirm the Eligibility List is active and assist the department as needed.

Upon notice of a selection from the hiring department, the Employment Analyst will review the status of candidates and reasons for selection or non-selection through the online function of the applicant tracking system. The hiring department will initiate an offer of employment letter to the most-highly qualified candidate. Approved format letters are available on the City's AlexNet through the Human Resources Department for use by hiring departments. The Analyst will confirm the information regarding salary and applicable pre-employment contingencies contained in the letter prior to its issue to the candidate. The hiring department will be asked to forward the required pre-employment documents in order to initiate the hiring process. (The original Criminal History Record Request (CHRR), a copy of the Authorization for Mandatory Pre-Employment Physical, and a copy of the Authorization for Mandatory Pre-Employment Drug Test).

Employment staff will confirm that the CHRR permission form is complete and notarized, and enter the data into the Virginia State Police system.

Restrictions on Criminal Record Checks:

- a. Departments may not conduct criminal record checks through any other jurisdiction or agency except the Virginia State Police Criminal Records Exchange without the permission of the Human Resources Director.
- b. Virginia law does not permit access to the criminal conviction records of minors (under the age of 18).

The hiring manager is responsible for informing the final candidate(s) that the offer of employment is contingent upon successful completion of pre-employment requirements. Hiring Managers are also responsible for ensuring that any pre-employment testing requirement arrangements are made for final candidates. Criminal background check costs will be borne by the department.

City employees who seek to transfer or be promoted into positions of trust shall undergo any pre-employment testing as a part of the selection process.

Notification to the Applicant of Criminal Record Check Results:

- a. If the Employment Division notifies the department that the criminal record check disqualifies the applicant, the department is responsible for notifying the applicant in writing and for advising the applicant of his/her right to appeal the hiring decision by showing that the criminal record data is not accurate or not relevant to the job.
- b. Appeals from applicants must be addressed in writing to the Human Resources Director.

Review of Criminal Record Data Received from the Virginia State Police:

- a. Consult with Employment Chief and the affected Department Head to determine whether the conviction data is disqualifying for the position of trust. (Consult the City Attorney and City Manager as needed).
- b. The Human Resources Director receives any appeals from disqualified applicants (in accordance with Section A, 4) and will review them with the City Attorney.
- c. If the Criminal Records Exchange data includes criminal convictions not reported on the application, notify the department and determine the proper course of action (usually termination).
- d. If the Criminal Records Exchange data concerns a current City employee, consult the Human Resources Director and Department Head to determine whether the criminal record is disqualifying for the employee's current position, and determine what course of action may be taken.

Salary decisions deserve careful consideration and should take into account relevant factors such as a candidate's current salary, previous work experience, and education, as well as the salaries and special qualifications of City employees in similar positions within the department. A job offer may not be made to an outside candidate at a rate higher than was advertised. Internal candidates will follow established policies set forth in appropriate Administrative Regulations for promotions, demotions and transfers. All hires at the O-P Step on the salary scale require Human Resources Director approval prior to making the offer to the selected candidate.

The hiring department is also responsible for notifying all referred applicants via email or in writing of the results of the departmental evaluation and selection process. This notification should be accomplished promptly. The Employment Analyst will notify all non-referred applicants.

Upon finalization of the job offer and receipt of the candidate's signed offer letter accepting the position, the hiring department will forward the following forms to initiate hiring:

- a. Personnel Action Form
- b. Personnel Data Form
- c. Employment Verification Form I-9
- d. Appropriate tax forms
- e. Child Support Form
- f. Grant-funded Form (if applicable)
- g. Direct Deposit Authorization

U.S. Citizenship Requirements: All persons selected for sworn, Uniformed Police, Fire (only Fire Marshals and Deputy Fire Marshals) and Office of Sheriff positions must be U.S. citizens. Persons selected for non-sworn City positions who are not U.S. citizens must possess a U.S. work permit (Employment Authorization Document) or an alien registration card. It is the responsibility of the hiring department to verify the employment eligibility of potential employees. Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification will be used for this purpose.

The Benefits Division of Human Resources will notify the hiring department of the scheduled dates for the new employees' orientation. Any questions concerning employee benefits, should be referred to the Chief of the Benefits and Records Division at 703-746-3785.

If an employee in acting status is promoted to the regular position, the department head is required to submit two Personnel Action Forms with the selection materials.

- a. Personnel Action Form #1 - returning the employee from acting status to the position previously held.
- b. Personnel Action Form #2 - promoting the employee from the position previously held to the new position.

When an employee moves from one department to another, the responsibility for completing the Personnel Action Form is as follows:

- a. The current department completes a Personnel Action Form indicating "transfer," signs off, and forwards the form to the employees' new department.
- b. The new department initiates a Personnel Action Form with the updated information, and submits both Personnel Action Forms to the Employment Analyst.

VII. POSITION UNDERFILL

- A. The department head may submit a request to underfill the vacant position following a minimum of two open recruitment cycles to fill the position at the budgeted level. The request must be made in writing to the Director of Human Resources for approval.
- B. An approved underfill position must be re-advertised as a promotional opportunity.
- C. Within a period of one year the employee must meet the minimum qualification standards described in the class specification for the authorized higher level budgeted position.
- D. The department head must certify within one year of the underfill appointment that the employee has met the minimum requirements of the authorized position. If the employee does not meet the minimum qualification standards within one year, the employee must be terminated from that position or the position converted to the underfill level.

VIII. PROVISIONAL RECLASSIFICATION

- A. Department heads may submit a request to the Director of Human Resources, to have a vacant position temporarily reclassified to a position in an equal or lower pay grade, accompanied by an appropriate existing class specification for the lateral/lower level classification.
- B. Human Resources will process these requests without formal analysis of a Job Analysis Questionnaire. Provisional positions will be filled in the same manner as regular positions.

- C. The limit on provisional reclassification is 12 months. At the end of the 12 months, the position either: a) reverts to the previous lateral/higher level classification, or b) remains in the lateral/lower classification pending formal analysis of the assigned duties stated in the Job Analysis Questionnaire. In either case, recruiting to fill the regular, full-time position shall then be initiated.

IX. INACTIVE RECRUITMENTS

Recruitments for positions that remain inactive or on hold longer than two (2) months shall be closed. A new requisition may be re-submitted at the time that the recruitment process is ready to begin again with the option of internal or open recruitment.

X. PROCEDURAL REVIEW

These procedures are designed to guide City of Alexandria departments through the employment process. Deviation from these procedures shall not entitle any applicant to any remedy or relief unless the applicant can prove that he or she has suffered harm as a direct result of the procedural error. Relief that may be granted to any applicant who has shown harm as a direct result of a failure to follow these procedures is limited to that which remedies the actual harm suffered by the applicant.

Procedural error that is not shown to have caused harm to the applicant shall not be grounds for relief, but the appropriate official(s) shall be advised of the error(s) and instructed in proper application of the City's employment procedures.

XI. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to these Employment Procedures must be approved in advance by the Director of Human Resources.

NON-PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS REQUIRING CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS**06/03/09**

All full-time, part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees of the City, as well as temporary clerical services staff, filling positions of trust on this list are subject to pre-employment criminal record checks. All positions are to be checked before hire.

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Chief Deputy Fire Marshal	3166
Code Enforcement Field Supervisor	3191
Code Enforcement Inspector I	3188
Code Enforcement Inspector II	3189
Code Enforcement Inspector III	3190
Director/Office of Bldg & Fire Code Admin	1261
Deputy Director/ Office of Bldg & Fire Code Admin	1262
Deputy Fire Marshal I	3163
Deputy Fire Marshal II	3164
Deputy Fire Marshal III	3165
Engineering Aide I	3045
Engineering Aide II	3192
Fire Marshal	1077

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Emergency Management Analyst	2418
Emergency Management Coordinator	1214
Emergency Management Outreach Specialist	3239

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

All positions (including temps)	
Pension Administrator	2728

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Supervisory Sanitarian	2709
------------------------	------

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Case Aide	3249
Caseworker	3025

NON-PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS REQUIRING CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

06/03/09 DRAFT

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT CONT.

Director, Adult Day Health Care	1230
Shelter Supervisor	3291
Social Worker I	2030
Social Worker II	2031
Supervisor, Social Worker	2032

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Account Clerk III	6052
Computer Operator II, III	3074, 3075
Computer Programmer Analyst I, II, III & IV	2380, 2379, 2382, 2383
Customer Support Engineer I, II	3836, 3837
Division Chief, Application	1216
Database Administrator I, II	2646, 2647
Deputy Director, ITS	1189
Director	1191
Division Chief, Application	1216
Division Chief, Database Management	1227
Division Chief, IT Project Management	1269
Division Chief, Network Services	1226
Division Chief, Network & Security Services	1215
EPO Supervisor	3209
Fiscal Analyst I	2263
Lotus Notes Support Engineer	3255
Network Engineer I, II and III	3250, 3251, 3252
Secretary III	6034
System Programmer Specialist	3229
Telecommunications Coordinator	2403
Telecommunications Specialist	2639

JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS COURT

Educational Assistant	2401
Probation Officer	2363
Court Services Supervisor I, II	2438, 2439

NON-PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS REQUIRING CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

06/03/09 DRAFT

LIBRARY

Delivery Clerk 6021

MH/MR/SA

Account Clerk I, II, III 6050, 6051, 6052
Administrative Assistant 2291
Administrative Technician 3247
Clerk II 6016
Clerk Typist I, II 6025, 6026
Client Intake Services Worker 6008
Contract Administrator 2409
Fiscal Analyst 2263
Fiscal Officer II and III 2342, 2343
Personnel Clerk 6038
Receptionist/Telephone Operator 6062
Secretary I, II, III 6318, 6319, 6034
Supervisory Administrative Assistant 2292

OFFICE ON WOMEN

Office on Women Community Education Specialist 3184
Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP) Community Educ Specialist
Employment Services Coordinator 2719
Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) Program Coordinator
SARA Social Worker I 2030
SARA Outreach Prevention Specialist 3832
SARA Volunteer Developer 3292
SARA Hispanic Outreach Prevention Specialist 3832
Domestic Violence Program (DVP) Coordinator 2290
DVP Shelter Supervisor (3 FTEs) 3248
DVP Social Worker I (3 FTEs) 2030
DVP Children's Social Worker 2030
DVP Volunteer Developer 3292
DVP Hispanic Outreach Prevention Specialist 3832

NON-PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS REQUIRING CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

06/03/09 DRAFT

PLANNING AND ZONING

City Architect	2387
Director	1218
Deputy Director	1219
Division Chief	1051
Geographic Information Sp. Supervisor	
Division Chief, Geographic Information Systems	1225
Division Chief, Park Planning	1247
Planning Assistant I, II	3277, 3278
Planning Technician	3137
Plans Examiner	3154
Principal Planner	2436
Senior Planning Technician	3236
Supervisory Administrative Officer	2349
Urban Designer	2384
Urban Planner I, II and III	2092, 2093, 2094
Zoning Inspector	3304

REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENTS

Director	1056
Deputy Director	1936
Real Estate Appraiser I, II	3082, 3083
Senior Real Estate Appraiser	3084
Division Chief, Real Estate Appraiser (per Dept 10/30/06)	2428

RECREATION

Account Clerk I, II, III	6050, 6051, 6052
Administrative Officer I	2339
Assistant Dockmaster	4109
Assistant Food Services Specialist	3067
Assistant Superintendent/Parks & Facilities Maintenance	3280
Assistant Superintendent/Tree Maintenance	3290
Custodian (Janitor)	8020
Deputy Director/Program Operations	1186
Deputy Director/P & NR & CP	1202
Director	1045
Division Chief	1134
Dockmaster	4110
Fiscal Officer	2341
Horticultural Specialist I	3302
Horticultural Specialist II	3303
Superintendent/Parks & Facility Maintenance	3035

NON-PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS REQUIRING CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

06/03/09 DRAFT

RECREATION CONT'D

Recreation Leader I, II, III, IV	3282, 3283, 3284, 3285
Recreation Supervisor I, II, III	2040, 2041, 2333
Undefined, Seasonal	

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Assistant Impounding Officer I	3179
Assistant Impounding Officer II	3160
Deputy Director/Transportation & Transit	1208
Division Chief/Environmental Quality	1258
Impounding Officer	3815
Traffic Signal/Parking Meter Repair Worker	3305

PUBLIC SAFETY

All Police, Fire, and Sheriff's Department employees (sworn and non-sworn) are subject to criminal record or criminal background checks according to their own departmental procedures.