

Criminal and Credit Checks on Employees and Volunteers

August 15, 2008

Question: The Estes Park Public Library Board of Trustees would like to pursue both criminal checks and credit checks on new employees. They are considering this for volunteers, as well.

Does any library out there perform either or both of these as a pre-employment screening process?

Claudine Perrault, Director

15 responses received from the "Colorado Public Library Director" listserv. Of those 15:

- 11 perform Criminal checks on staff
- 8 perform Criminal checks on volunteers
- 1 performs Drug testing on staff
- 2 *should* perform Satire checks on their directors

Actual replies:

Yes, Aurora by Council mandate performs background (criminal) checks on staff and on volunteers. I'm not aware of a credit check ... not sure what the purpose of that would be. Let me know if you'd like more detailed info, and I'll get it to you.

Patti Bateman, Library Services Division, City of Aurora

GCLD has done criminal checks on all new employees and volunteers for about three years now. Once that you do one check, you have to do a check on every new employee and volunteer. Current employees are grandfathered in, but if you did a check on one of them, you'd have to do everyone.

No credit checks here.

Mary Anne Hanson-Wilcox, Grand County Library District

Broomfield does a background check on all new employees and volunteers. No credit checks though.

Roberta Depp, Broomfield Library

We also do a background check on each new employee. We recently caught a former drug conviction that the employee thought had been cleared from their record. We do not do drug testing but I have a board member who may press for it. I would hate to go that far.

Amelia Shelley, Garfield County Public Library District

The City of Littleton has done background checks on all new employees for years. About two years ago we started to do the same for volunteers on the grounds that some of our volunteers work with children or go into people's homes. When we instituted this policy we did background checks on all of our existing volunteers, as well - do one and you have to do them all. This miffed some of them and we had to talk fast to keep them as volunteers. The City picks up the tab. We do not do credit checks.

Margery Smith, Director, Bemis/Littleton Public Library

We do not require background checks for staff or volunteers. I guess that's one of the nice things about a small town; we already know everyone who either works or volunteers at the library.

Jackie Welch, Pagosa Springs

Town of Berthoud does criminal check and we will continue that policy now that we are a district. We recently had someone with computer fraud conviction apply for a job. Wouldn't want that person having access to patron information, etc.

As for credit checks, even the best person can get into financial trouble. For instance, through the actions of a spouse or through being defrauded. Credit check is too invasive and doesn't necessarily give accurate information about the person's ability to do the job.

We just go through the local police department.

Sara Wright, Berthoud Library

Criminal tests and drug tests are done on all new employees. I'd like to do criminal checks on the volunteers also but that has not been done yet.

Joanie Howland, Cortez Library

DPL does criminal background checks on all staff and volunteers who work with children.

Shirley Amore, Denver City Librarian

We do criminal background checks on all new employees and volunteers.

Janine Reid, Executive Director, High Plains Library District

Town of Vail does background checks on all employees (incl. seasonals).

Lori Ann Barnes, Vail

We do criminal checks—basic level—on any staff or volunteers who might contact vulnerable population, youth seniors, home-bound. I would question credit checks except for staff who directly handle cash, accounting.

Ted Schmidt, Loveland

We just completed adopting volunteer and staff policies regarding background checks. MSEC recommended YEARLY background checks for employees, since they interact with children.

Sue Lathrop, Clear Creek Director

How about a lie detector test and throw in an occasional water boarding just for laughs?

Paul Paladino, Montrose Library District

I follow the police report in the local paper.

Jeff Donlan, Salida Regional Library
