

# View of Human Resources Professionals on Background Screening Methods and Effectiveness

Conducted by HR.com for the National Association of Professional Background Screeners  
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As employers seek to make informed decisions related to their hiring, ensure safety in our workplaces and communities, retain the most qualified candidates and mitigate risk, they are increasingly turning to professional background checks to accomplish their goals. Nearly all human resources professionals now utilize background screening, citing public safety as their top priority. Employers of all sizes and locations report using screening as part of their onboarding process, typically after an interview or job offer. The number one challenge reported is the length of time to get results.

The National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS) commissioned HR.com to conduct an unprecedented national survey of 1,528 human resources professionals to gauge their views on background screening.

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**BACKGROUND SCREENS ARE NEARLY UNIVERSAL.** In an era when workplace security is more important than ever, employers are increasingly turning to background screens. Nearly all the employers surveyed – 96 percent – stated their organization conducts one or more types of employment background screening. A background check is, in very basic terms, information which is compiled on an individual which may be considered when determining eligibility for a job or housing. Eighty-three percent of respondents screen all full-time employees.

**SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY.** Overwhelmingly, employers cited public safety as the top reason they conduct

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background screens. A full 89 percent stated they conduct screens to protect employees, customers and others. In a time when workplace shootings and other violence are often news topics, employers are responding by implementing screening programs to protect employees, customers and communities. Other top reasons cited for screening: Improving quality of hires (52 percent), Protecting company reputation (45 percent), Law/Regulation (44 percent).

**EMPLOYERS RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURACY BUT ARE CHALLENGED WITH THE LENGTH OF**

**TIME TO GET RESULTS.** Human resource professionals highlighted the need for accuracy in their screening, with 98 percent responding they believe it is “very important” to their organization that the screens are “accurate.” At the same time, nearly two in three (62 percent) stated that the length of time to get results is the most significant challenge facing their organization when conducting background screens. With states or locales increasingly removing identifying information, such as address and dates of birth from public records the challenge is expected to remain. Redacting identifiers can lead to delays in hiring or applicants losing out on a job while the search for identifiers to confirm or refute that a record matches the applicant is ongoing.

**BACKGROUND SCREENS ARE USED BY BUSINESSES OF VARIOUS SIZE AND TYPE; PRIMARILY AFTER INTERVIEW OR JOB OFFER.** More than half of the respondents surveyed represented companies with fewer than 99 employees (52 percent) with nearly a quarter (24 percent) of all respondents coming from companies with fewer than 24 employees. Nearly half of respondents (46 percent) represent privately held companies with 37 percent representing non-profits. Most wait to conduct a background screen until after a job interview or conditional job offer. A full 86 percent conduct a background screen after the job interview, including 55

percent that wait until after a conditional job offer is made.

**COMPONENTS OF A BACKGROUND CHECK, WHAT'S COMMON AND WHAT'S NOT.** The vast majority of respondents report including some form of criminal history check in the screening program (97 percent). On the other hand, 77 percent of employers currently do not use social media in their screening process, and only five percent use social media for all candidates. To determine which components may be included in a background check, applicants are encouraged to consult with their prospective employers and property managers.

#### **About NAPBS**

Founded in 2003 as a not-for-profit trade association, the National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS) represents the interests of more than 850 member companies around the world that offer employment and tenant background screening. NAPBS provides relevant programs and training aimed at empowering members to better serve clients and maintain standards of excellence in the background screening profession, and presents a unified voice in the development of national, state, and local regulations. For more information, visit [www.napbs.com](http://www.napbs.com).

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