

GUIDE Written Materials

When hiring staff and volunteers, your organization should develop and request materials from candidates. Collectively, these written materials will assist you in recruiting and screening potential employees and volunteers who will have direct contact with youth.

RECRUITMENT

Screening begins at the outset of the hiring process. Remember to express your commitment to safeguarding youth and to outline corresponding expectations in all communications to potential candidates, including job postings and application forms.

Position Descriptions

Potential applicants will read your organization's position description and decide whether to apply, essentially self-screening. Therefore, take time to carefully develop the position description, which sets the tone for the entire hiring process and lets candidates know that your organization takes child protection and screening seriously.

Best Practice 3 Screen Employees and Volunteers

Goal 3 Implement Screening Measures

OBJECTIVES

Learn how to use written materials in your screening process and inform the development and review of those materials.

AUDIENCE

Committee members and individual(s) responsible for hiring

TIME

15 minutes to read,
implementation time will vary



When Drafting Your Position Description, Remember to Include:

- Overview of duties, including those working with youth
- Required competencies
- Responsibilities specific to child protection, such as reporting and supervision
- Screening process (e.g., verifying employment and education; contacting references; two interviews; and fingerprinting)

Applications

Developing an application allows your organization to proactively collect necessary information. For example, an application may ask the candidate to list all former residences and schools attended or request information about past disciplinary action. Consider including at least one open-ended question asking applicants to outline their approaches to working with youth and explain why they are well-suited for the position. Applications also allow your organization to reiterate your child safeguarding values and introduce safeguarding efforts (e.g., a link to your child protection policy) that can be discussed further at the interview (see *Guide: Interviews and Reference Checks (BP 3, Goal 3)*).

A JCC included in its job posting for an after-school program position that it sought "an individual with a deep understanding of child protection in various settings." One applicant wrote, in response to an open-ended application question, about their appreciation for child protection based on their participation on a local synagogue's child safety committee. The hiring committee typically would have overlooked this individual because they had limited teaching experience. However, the applicant's insight into child protection on the application piqued the interest of the committee, and the individual was interviewed. During the interview, the candidate said they were interested in the position and wanted to convey their own experiences and knowledge about child protection, because the organization's application so clearly outlined youth safeguarding values. Ultimately, this applicant was hired and ended up being one of their most dedicated employees.

Consider using an application in lieu of a resume for positions where applicants might lack significant work experience, such as youth leaders, camp counselors, or volunteers. It is also recommended to have tailored applications: one for staff positions, one for volunteers, and another for minors. Keep questions specific to the recruitment process and simplify the application process where possible by, for example, developing fillable pdf forms.

APPLICATION DESIGN

Consider highlighting your organization's safeguarding commitment by including:

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION	ABOUT THE APPLICANT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mission, vision, and values pertaining to safeguarding youth.• A link to child protection policies or statement of child protection laws by which your organization abides.• Description of the type of background checks that an applicant will undergo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A request for description of relevant experiences and why the person would be a good candidate for the position.• A request for a statement of approach or philosophy to working with youth.• Space to list information needed for an initial screening, such as schools attended, certifications, licenses, current and former residences, and employment history, including reason for leaving.• Place to provide a description of disciplinary actions taken by an educational institution or employer; or the revocation or suspension of any certification, registration, or license. <i>Remember that screening is tied to the specific duties of the position.</i>• Request for references with full contact information or letters of recommendation. <i>See Guide: Interviews and Reference Checks (BP 3, Goal 3).</i>• Optional: request for letter of interest, resume, and other documents (e.g. school transcripts) required to preliminarily review an applicant's qualifications.• Ask applicants to affirm, in writing, that the information they have provided is accurate.

SCREENING

Cover Letters & Resumes

Cover letters and resumes can be used as an initial screening tool. Cover letters provide, in an applicant's own words, their motivation for applying and the experiences that make them a qualified candidate. This can help bring to life an applicant's personality, interest, and passion, beyond their qualifications. Finding candidates that share the organization's values and possess a willingness to learn and implement child protection policies and procedures is essential to safeguarding youth.

Resumes, on the other hand, provide a roadmap for screening. Applicants list concrete information about their qualifications, including professional experiences, education, employment, or licensure. Ask applicants during interviews for more details about the experiences and credentials listed on their resume, and verify that information by confirming degrees, professional licenses or certifications; leadership positions in professional associations; and places and dates of employment. Determine whether any of the listed institutions have taken formal action against the individual for wrongdoing. *See Guide: Background Checks (BP 3, Goal 3) for additional information.*

Jeffrey Epstein, a financier, was a convicted sex offender facing charges for human trafficking. At the start of his professional career, Epstein lied on his resume, stating that he had earned a college degree. A school hired him without verifying his resume. His lie was discovered at his next position at the global investment, securities trading, and brokerage firm, Bear Stearns Companies, Inc. In *Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich*, Michael Tennebaum, a former general partner of Bear Stearns, says not firing Epstein after the lie was detected was "one of my important mistakes in my career." While that decision would not have changed Epstein's behavior, it did put him on the path of becoming a billionaire, which propelled his access to youth and his ability to run a human trafficking ring.

In addition to screening for baseline credentials, your organization should scan resumes for any irregularities, such as unaccounted gaps of time (personal or employment), history of relocation, or conflicting information. These are not necessarily reasons to stop a candidate from moving forward to an interview, but they are areas of potential inquiry to be addressed in the interview or when speaking with references.