

Farm Employee Management: Applicant Background Checks

There are numerous companies that will perform employment applicant background checks for a fee. The more sensitive (or highly-paid) the employment position, the more an employer may wish to consider investing in a formal background check – which often includes a credit history check. In these circumstances, it will be necessary to obtain the applicant's written consent to a background check and utilize the services of a company that will assure compliance with state and federal law regarding background checks. However, for many farm employment applicants, such a formal background check may not be necessary. Rather, the employer will want to conduct a background check by other available means.

Check References: Always requests references as well as names and contact information for former employers. Contact those references to ask about the applicant. Your goal is to verify information provided by the applicant on a resume or job application.

Web Search: Simply “search” the applicant's name. It may help to add the state, school names or names of current and former communities. It will be necessary to read and determine whether information is actually about the same person, especially where names are common. Check multiple search engines to see if different results are yielded.

Sex Offender Registry: In Iowa (as well as other states), the [sex offender registry](http://www.iowasexoffender.com/), www.iowasexoffender.com/, is public information.

Iowa Courts Online: Go to “[Start a Case Search Here](http://www.iowacourts.state.ia.us)”, www.iowacourts.state.ia.us, then enter the individual's last, first and middle names. Information (if any) related to both civil and criminal matters in Iowa courts will be displayed. If the name is common, more information may be needed to confirm identity.

Social Media: Go to social media sites such as www.facebook.com or www.twitter.com and search for whether the individual has a social media account. Information that individuals make public on such websites is accessible to prospective employers.

Address or Phone Websites: Several websites allow free searches by name, phone numbers or addresses. Checking such address websites can reveal history about where the individual has lived, how often they have moved and whether such information matches that provided on an employment application. Sites include (but are not limited to) –

www.whitepages.com

www.411.com

www.anywho.com

Another site that provides some free background checks is www.intellius.com – however, this site also provides some more in-depth background checks for a fee.

See the Ag Decision Maker website for additional resources on [Employee Labor & Management](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/wdhumanresources.html), www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/wdhumanresources.html.

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