



CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

Date: April 18, 2011
To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Wanda S. Page, Deputy City Manager
From: Alethea Bell, Director of Human Resources
RE: Background Investigations Policy

Executive Summary

The administration presents for your information a new policy and guidelines (attachment 1) recently drafted for the purpose of establishing uniform guidance for conducting background investigations related to hiring new employees and assessing potential volunteers for City service. In 2005, the City of Durham amended its *Recruitment and Selection policy (PER 301 R-4)*. This policy provides overall guidance to departments in recruiting and hiring qualified individuals for City service based on job specific experience, education, knowledge, skills and abilities.

Background

In January of 2011, the administration was challenged to examine the need for a question concerning criminal history on employment applications obtained during the hiring process. The administration responded by reviewing current procedures for obtaining and using criminal background information and determined that criminal background information was being collected but not being used to initially screen applicants for City positions. An exception to the use of criminal history information obtained from applications was in the hiring process of individuals for public safety, financially sensitive, and positions in direct contact with minors. During the review, staff reviewed the applications of all employees hired by the City of Durham over a two year period and found 41 candidates had been hired by the City during this timeframe with criminal history in their background. In February of 2011, the administration removed questions about criminal history from all employment applications. To ensure that all background check components selected during the hiring process are relevant to the position being selected and that information is obtained and used appropriately during the hiring process, the administration issued additional guidance to departments. This guidance has been formalized in the attached policy.

Recommendation

The administration recommends the City Council receive the update and policy attached "Background Investigations" for information.

Issues / Analysis

The attached policy and guidelines details the City's current procedures for reviewing the background of potential employees and volunteers of the City.

Financial Impact

Included in the attached policy is a required procedure to obtain a standard background service check for all potential employees who have been given a conditional offer of employment. This required procedure is in addition to physical exams and drug screens already required to be performed on employees who have been given a conditional offer of employment. The standard background service package for these new employees is expected to cost approximately \$2,000 per year and will be absorbed in departmental budgets making employment offers.

SDBE

Not applicable.

Attachments

- Background Investigations Policy and Guidelines