

CI TIMES



Safety & Security with a Vulnerable Population

Nonprofit and community organizations depend on thousands of volunteers to help support their extensive programs. Many of these volunteers work exclusively with children or elderly people. Therefore, it is important to check each volunteer to ensure that potential predators do not have access to these more vulnerable people. Because all volunteers could potentially have access to children and elderly, all adult volunteers and employees should go through a proper background investigation regardless of relationships with staff, position in the community, or any other reason.

Volunteers are the foundation of many small to medium nonprofit organizations. Volunteers help organizations achieve their missions and objectives. However, a key challenge for any organization is to select volunteers who are competent and contribute to the delivery of service in a safe environment. The following are some best practice guidelines for conducting Background Investigations on Volunteers and Employees:

What are Background Investigations of Volunteers & Employees? Background Investigations (BI) are a process performed by an organization to ensure that the right match is made between the work to be done and the person who will do it. BI serve to create and maintain a safe environment. It is an ongoing process designed to identify any person, whether paid or unpaid, volunteer or staff, who may potentially cause harm to children, youth or other vulnerable persons.

Educating participants, staff and volunteers about potential abuse is very important. However, it is not enough! As soon as any organization opens, whether run by staff or volunteers, it has a responsibility to appropriately check any individual who will have access to vulnerable people.

BI requirements and procedures may differ for each nonprofit organization according to the level of risk to which participants are exposed. Clearly, the requirements to check volunteers who would be unsupervised while working with children or other vulnerable people are greater than for volunteers who would work with the same type of participants in a supervised setting.

Although it is recognized that organizations must manage scarce resources, the selection of the level of a BI conducted must be exercised with caution. All nonprofit organizations should develop a BI approach that is consistent with its duty of care. Organizations will be held accountable for the harm caused to participants resulting from their failure to exercise their duty of care.

The application of good BI policies will ensure that organizations meet their obligation to take reasonable steps to protect those in their care.

Background Investigations measures? Setting the BI standard is based on the risk factor. For example, with low-risk positions, you may have a minimum BI standard that volunteers complete a consent form, the information contained therein, is verified, and that supervisors regularly meet with volunteers to provide feedback on their work.

Actively work to reduce risk in specific positions. For example, you could design positions that require volunteers to work in pairs with vulnerable people or introduce an initial mentor phase where an experienced person works with new volunteers.

If your volunteers are active in more than one position, make sure they are checked for the position where the level of risk to vulnerable people is the highest. If volunteers change positions, make sure the extent of the BI used for

the previous position is appropriate for the new one.

Be very clear that your organization is extremely careful about selecting volunteers, and do not apologize for that fact. Make sure that your promotional materials, including your position descriptions, are kept accurate and up-to-date.

If you are recruiting through your local volunteer center, ensure that its staff is kept up-to-date about changes in position descriptions and of any special considerations that would affect the referral of volunteers. When someone indicates interest in a position, send information to him or her before you commit to an interview. Ensure that the documents include all of the information available about the position in question, and about the organization's BI measures.

It is only fair that there are no surprises, and that potential applicants are given an opportunity to check themselves out at this point. It also saves time that might have been wasted interviewing someone who was not aware of the BI measures and who refuses to participate in them.

- It is important to have a formal recruitment process.
- The organization should be open about its process, including the BI, and make it clear that not everyone is accepted for the position for which they apply.
- Recruitment materials should indicate that your organization thoroughly checks applicants.

The BI process should be based on the assessment of the risk to which the participants are exposed. Consider the following steps:

- Look at each position individually.
- Examine the position description and determine the nature and degree of risk to which participants are exposed through the delivery of services by volunteers in the position.
- Review the BI process for the position.

The intrusiveness of the BI, which can include police records checks are proportional to the degree of risk to which the participant is exposed during the delivery of service by a volunteer in the position. There is no magic or set in stone approach to selecting a BI process.

To determine which process is appropriate, ask yourself these two basic questions:

1. Given all that you know about the position, including its risks and the vulnerability of the participants, what do you need to know about the applicant in order to decide whether to accept or reject them? Do you need to know about?
 - professional qualifications,
 - attitudes towards participants,
 - ability to develop bonds with vulnerable participants,
 - criminal history,
 - motivation for volunteering.
2. What BI process will provide this kind of information?

Consider Commercial Investigations (CI) for giving the protection your organization needs. Today's business environment dictates that prudent business practices require background investigations. CI provides valuable information about your job candidates, volunteers, employees and business partners. Due diligence is an important component of any business transaction. CI can assist you through its attentive and persistent pursuit of accurate, timely, cost effective and fully compliant background investigation reports delivered with exceptional client service. Visit our website for more details of our service offering and recommended best practices. Contact a representation at CI to discuss your specific needs at 800-284-0906 or [in-fo@commercialinvestigationsllc.com](mailto:info@commercialinvestigationsllc.com).

Inside this issue:

Safety & Security with a Vulnerable Population	1
CI Exhibits	1
Due Diligence: Clean Cut and Fresh Start	2
Meet Due Diligence: Last Scene From Due	2
National Volunteer Week	3
Inquiry Spotlight: Motor Vehicle	3

CI Exhibits

Event CI Attended:

National Association of Professional Background Screeners
(NAPBS) September Phoenix AZ

Recent 2013 Conferences Exhibited:

New York State Association for Medical Staff Services
(NYSAMSS) April Albany NY

New England Association Directors of Healthcare Volunteer Services
(NEADHVS) May Mystic CT

New York State Association of Volunteer Services Administrators
(NYSAVSA) May Saratoga Springs NY

Points of Light - National Conference on Volunteering
June Washington DC

Association for Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals
(AHRVP) August Indianapolis IN

Due Diligence: Clean Cut and Fresh Start

In our Spring edition of CI Times we saw Due try to get in touch with nature as he applied for a Camp Counselor position with the highly reputable Camp Runamuck. Camp Runamuck, being a highly regarded organization, runs background investigations using CI's all new Employee Screening Solution (ESS) portal technology. As you may recall, the portal provided the camp with an effective solution for streamlining the screening process by eliminating the need for painstaking data entry. CI designed the custom portal with Camp Runamuck's unique logo. Due presented himself as the perfect outdoorsy type and had the charismatic personality to lead and inspire young campers. Fortunately, through CI's background investigation, Camp Runamuck found that Due had a lengthy criminal record and was registered as a level 1 sex offender in the State of New York.

After everything that had transpired Due decided to clean up his life and make a fresh start. He moved from NY to CT and entered a 10 week intervention program. He successfully completed the program and was looking to start anew. Due always dreamt of becoming an entrepreneur and as such would not need to complete an exhaustive background investigation. Due began his own lawn care service, Clean Cut Clippings. Due purchased a truck and a shiny red tractor with a professional looking logo. Due successfully started growing his client base but needed to obtain larger clients. Due began promoting his services; he decided to try to secure business with some local camp site parks and recreation areas. Due bid on a contract with the Greenville Town Park. As part of the bidding process, the company that is chosen would also agree to volunteer time to help provide extra upkeep of the park common areas, with an option of providing transportation assistance to youth, or counseling of campers in various recreational programs.

Due's company, Clean Cut Clippings won the bid and the only additional thing that needed to be done was to successfully pass a background check! Unfortunately for the Town of Greenville they were using Bargain Basement Backgrounds and the town was only running a low level national criminal database search and did not pick up on Due's sex offender status. Due Diligence passed the background check with flying colors.

Due Diligence was awarded the contract for the Town of Greenville and successfully landed his first big contract. Due was in business! Unfortunately for the town, they were unaware of the danger lurking in the grass.

When Due moved to CT he failed to register with the CT Sex Offender Registry. Additionally, since Bargain Basement Backgrounds only ran a database search it did not reveal Due's level 1 registration in the State of NY.

Had the Town of Greenville used Commercial Investigations (CI) as their background investigations vendor things could've transpired a little differently. CI's sex offender registry inquiry is run directly through the NYS Department of Criminal Justice and therefore, reveals information pertaining to level 1 sex offenders. To view the report CI would have produced on Due's, go to:

http://commercialinvestigationllc.com/files/DD_Report_10_29_2013.pdf

Now that Due has landed his first big contract, what will he attempt next? Stay tuned to find out! In order to learn more about these services and other products offered by Commercial Investigations please contact a CI representative at

[\(800\)284-0906](tel:8002840906) or info@commercialinvestigationllc.com.

Stay tuned to find out what Due is up to next!



Meet Due Diligence Last Scene from Due

In the last edition of CI Times, Due applied for a position with the highly reputable Camp Runamuck. Camp Runamuck was using CI's Employee Screening Solutions (ESS) Portal Technology which eliminates the need for painstaking data entry.

The Camp was overwhelmed with Due's charismatic personality and leadership skills however, CI's background investigation told a different story. Camp Runamuck found out that Due had two previous convictions and a pending Felony case. Furthermore, Due was a level 1 sex offender in the State of NY.

Camp Runamuck made the decision that Due had no place in counseling campers and removed him from further consideration. The Camp protected their campers and their reputation by foregoing the hiring of a registered sex offender and criminal.

To see Due's past reports, view his page online at: www.commercialinvestigationllc.com/duespage

Read previous issues of CI Times to see the full details of Due's life at www.commercialinvestigationllc.com



National Volunteer Week

April 21 through 27 was National Volunteer Week and Commercial Investigations enjoyed the spirit of volunteering with our neighbor, Vineyard Community Church.

The church is located at 121 Remsen Street in Cohoes and during the last five week days of each month they provide a lunch for those in need in the community.

Commercial Investigations gathered together food supplies to be used for future lunches and brought them over during the week. CI was able to work in the kitchen one day to assist in meal preparation; including making the salad and assisting with the pasta.

The volunteers at this location did an outstanding job, preparing the luncheon to the delight of the community members that attended. We thank the Vineyard Community Church for the service they provide to the community and for allowing Commercial Investigations to be a small part of the day.



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Inquiry Spotlight

MOTOR VEHICLE

Employers and nonprofits should consider performing a Motor Vehicle inquiry on any applicant that will be assuming a position which requires them to drive a vehicle to perform their duties. A Motor Vehicle inquiry should be done regardless of whether the applicant will be driving a facility-owned vehicle, their own vehicle, or a rental vehicle. The information available through a Motor Vehicle inquiry also provides a more complete integrity verification and understanding of the applicant. Even if they are not assuming a position that requires them to drive.

The Motor Vehicle inquiry contains the licensee's address, license class, date of birth, Social Security Number (in some states), driving violations, accidents, suspensions/revocations and more. Most states also include gender, height, weight, eye color and/or hair color. The identifying data revealed by the Motor Vehicle inquiry provides a means to verify applicant supplied data, especially the date of birth. An applicant's date of birth is very important to verify, as it is a key piece of information used to determine if an applicant has any prior criminal convictions.

A Motor Vehicle inquiry will reveal a suspended/revoked license, patterns of reckless behavior, insurance risks, and/or substance abuse. If your applicant is irresponsible or negligent with a motor vehicle, or otherwise, your organization may be held responsible for any accidents or incidents that occur as a result. Therefore, motor vehicle information can be very beneficial to obtain on all applicants.

Contact CI at (800) 284-0906 or info@commercialinvestigationsllc.com for more information on CI's Motor Vehicle inquiry.

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