

## Police Reference Checks in the Hiring Process

The City has a long standing practice of conducting employment reference checks on all external and internal hires. Two recent employment reference checks are required for all external hires. For youth applicants who are just entering the job market, this requirement is modified to one reference which could be from a volunteer position or an academic reference from a teacher. Employment reference checks are an important and integral part of the selection process and provide independent information on a person's qualifications, work performance and employment history.

There are a limited number of areas where a Police Reference Check is also conducted as a pre-condition of employment for candidates who have been offered a position. The Province has enacted legislation requiring Police Reference Checks in Senior Services & Long Term Care, Children's Services and Paramedic Services. There are some positions in Municipal Licensing & Standards that require a level of security clearance from Toronto Police Services which conduct their own Criminal Record Check as part of their security clearance process.

The City's Police Reference Check policy requires a Vulnerable Sector Check for certain positions that work directly with children or vulnerable persons in positions of trust and authority. These include community recreation workers, and employees working in our Shelter system. The Vulnerable Sector Check includes a regular Police Reference Check as well as a scan of the national pardoned sex offender's registry. This additional level of screening ensures that we are limiting the opportunity for people who had been convicted of a sexual offense between 1970 and 1998 for which a pardon has been granted to be placed in positions working directly with children or vulnerable persons. Approximately 14,000 of the pardons granted during that period were for sex offenses. Pardons are no longer granted for sexual offenses, and the conviction remains on the individual's criminal record.

The City is partnering with the John Howard Society and their Fair Chance Hiring Campaign to promote our police reference check policy which restricts the use of police reference checks to those positions where the safety and protection of children and vulnerable persons is required, or where a reference check is a legislative requirement.

The Fair Chance Hiring campaign identifies employers who have policies that are designed to enable people with a criminal record to fairly compete for jobs that they are qualified to perform. This campaign will help to reduce the stigma associated with having a criminal record and will become a component of our Diversity and Inclusion recruitment outreach campaigns.

When a police reference check is a requirement for an employment or volunteer position in the City, our recruitment material will identify the requirement at the time of application but not request a police reference check until a conditional offer is extended to the candidate or a volunteer position offered. Divisions that require a Vulnerable Sector Check cover the costs associated with those checks that are conducted by Toronto Police Services and reimburse the costs for reference checks obtained from other Police Services.

Applicants to volunteer or employment positions at the City always obtain their own Police Reference Check themselves and then determine if they wish to share the results with the City. In cases where there are criminal convictions on the record, the candidate is always provided the opportunity to meet with the Division to discuss any concerns raised by the criminal convictions. People & Equity and Legal Services assist Divisions if there are findings on a police reference check that may warrant the withdrawal of offer of employment.