



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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July 25, 2000

Honorable Charles W. Campbell, Jr.
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Re: Response to 1999-2000 Ventura County Grand Jury Report
County Pre-employment Background Checks

Dear Judge Campbell:

As required by California Penal Code section 933.05, this letter is a response to the findings and recommendations of the 1999-2000 Ventura County Grand Jury's Report entitled *County Pre-employment Background Checks*. The following are my responses:

Findings

I concur with the findings of the Grand Jury.

Recommendations

1. The County should complete its planned policy for conducting pre-employment background checks as quickly as possible.

Comments/Response:

This policy is being prepared by County Human Resources.

2. At a minimum, the policy should include background checks on all prospective management and professional employees, including those persons who are being considered for promotion into those positions. These checks should include identity verification, education (and degrees earned), work history, criminal search and DMV search and can be conducted by outside agencies for about \$100 per employee.

Comments/Response

The caliber of background investigation the County will receive for \$100 will be a computer verification of information provided by the prospective employee(s). The results of the background will be as good as the information placed into the computerized systems. If an erroneous name and social security number are used, the background inquiry will verify information potentially not related to the applicant.

SPECIAL SERVICES

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Because of the importance of accurate identification, California school districts have mandated Livescan fingerprint checks to meet their legislated criminal history check requirements.

Other background inquiries not included in the computerized \$100 background investigations are employee financial history and status. This type of inquiry could identify potential employees more prone to get involved in fraudulent activities or theft due to poor management of their personal finances.

Residential and reference checks are not included in a \$100 computerized background check. Both of these background inquiries provide information on a potential problem that may not be identifiable through any other means.

The content of the County Human Resources Department background policy is unknown at this time. The forthcoming policy may include a more inclusive background, at a higher cost, for Department heads and high level managers.

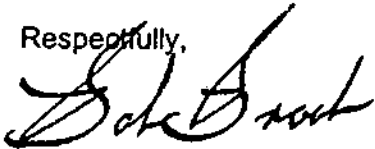
3. Job announcements and application forms should state that all prospective County employees are subject to a thorough background investigation and will be required to sign a waiver to that effect.

Comments/Response:

I agree that all announcements and application forms should contain an advisement regarding a potential background investigation.

There are benefits to performing, at a minimum, a computerized background check as identified in Recommendation 2 for all County employees. Many clerical support positions perform very valuable and sensitive financial operations from medical billings to maintenance of confidential payroll information. Outside of the Sheriff's Department, I am not aware of any mechanism in place to identify a high-risk prospective employee due to any past criminal acts and/or past work performance or to verify compliance to educational requirements.

Respectfully,



BOB BROOKS
Ventura County Sheriff