

HB 2175—Use of abuse information for DHS employment screening

Talking points for October 1, 2009 implementation of abuse background screening for DHS employees and volunteers

- DHS is expanding background screening for DHS existing employees, volunteers, and new hires, to include histories of founded abuse. This will be in addition to criminal background checks already conducted.
- Implementation is scheduled to begin in October 1, 2009.
- The new process will also include reviewing new cases of founded abuse on current employees and volunteers.
- The 2007 Oregon Legislature approved House Bill 2175 (now ORS 409.025 and 409.027), giving DHS the authority to use abuse and neglect information to screen applicants for employee, volunteer and provider positions.
- We will not implement for providers of service (Phase 2) until resources and an approved plan are in place.

How will the background screening work?

- DHS employee recruitment announcements will include notice that abuse findings will be part of the background check process.
- Current DHS employees and volunteers who become subject of an abuse investigation must report that to Human Resources. They may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to do so.
- Current employees, volunteers and applicants who apply for new positions within DHS will be screened for abuse and neglect history, in addition to the existing criminal background check, by the Background Check Unit (formerly called the Criminal Records Unit) upon offer of employment or volunteer placement.
- Every time a background check for employment/volunteer placement is conducted, the DHS Background Check Unit will access abuse records. If the applicant's history includes a founded abuse or neglect, a weight test will be used to determine whether the individual is suitable for the position or volunteer placement for which they have applied. The DHS evaluation process will consider the individual's intentions, and actions or inactions, as well as the responsibilities of the position.
- Based on the fitness determination decision, Human Resources will take the appropriate action regarding the hiring or the volunteer placement. Employees can appeal decisions based upon abuse and neglect information through the current HR and BCU processes.