



## What HR Managers Need to know About the Evolving NAPBS Accreditation Standards

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In March, NAPBS achieved a key milestone by accrediting their 100th Background Screeners firm.

There are few reliable statistics on how many employment screening firms there are in the United States. Estimates range from 2000-3000. Many of these are very small, perhaps only doing screens for a few employers.

There are about 450 screening firms that are currently members of NAPBS. Some of these firms are primarily tenant screening with employment screening a small percentage of their business. So the 100 firms that have been accredited have reached a significant number for employers choosing their employment background screening provider.

Employers are increasingly sophisticated in choosing their employment screening partner. They understand that while the industry is highly regulated with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (and state versions of the act), the Driver Privacy Protection Act (and state versions of this act) there are no licensing requirements to become an employment screening firm outside of some states' requirements that employment screeners have a private investigation license. The thought that the local nail salon probably has more licensing requirements than their employment screening partner has made employers look for other, more objective means in which to qualify their employment screening partner.

NAPBS Accreditation has become the top objective means in which to evaluate employment screening firms. Several years ago, NAPBS accreditation was a "feather in the cap" of employment screeners that put them above most of their competitors. That has not changed, but NAPBS Accreditation is increasingly becoming a minimum standard when employers choose their employment screening partner. The "Are you a Member of NAPBS" question on 'Request for Proposals' has evolved into "Are you Accredited by the NAPBS."

### **Insurers Recognizing Accreditation Value**

Insurers are increasingly looking at NAPBS Accreditation status when underwriting liability insurance for employment screening firms. Accredited companies are eligible for underwriting credits/savings from more insurers. The employment screening arena is highly litigious and settlements can be huge. While the accreditation process is necessarily aimed at employment screener protection, several sections of the NAPBS Accreditation deal with client education for their processes. And so, an employment screener that has policies and procedures for client education is less likely to become ensnared in client litigation in addition to the decreased likelihood of becoming involved in litigation because their policies and procedures were lacking.

### **NAPBS Accreditation Standard in Process of Revision**

On October 9, 2017, the NAPBS published a proposed new standard for NAPBS Accreditation. The proposed standard has 68 clauses. The previous standard contained 58. In addition, most of the existing clauses have modifications. Existing clauses may also have a different clause number than previously. The proposed new standard is a substantive change from the old. Comments from the membership were solicited and many suggestions were received. The proposed standard is currently being reviewed with consideration of the comments submitted.

The new standard will be a higher standard than previously. Many of the proposed standards will increase or introduce new minimums regarding:

- Document Management (similar to ISO standards for ensuring control and accuracy of all documents used in the course of providing services.)
- Information Technology Certifications
- Employee credentialing and training
- Knowledge and compliance with changing laws and regulations

## Conclusion

Earning accreditation is a difficult and arduous process for background screening firms, however, employers that engage the services of accredited background screening firms stand to gain the best possible results.

Choosing an accredited firm is a cost-effective way for employers to stay informed about and navigate the maze of legal requirements that impact background screening without needing to overly invest in staff and resources. This is particularly important as we continue to see growth in FCRA lawsuits, the influx of new 'ban-the-box' legislation and numerous state or local requirements. Of course, using an accredited background screening firm is not a guarantee that you will not be sued or made a target of an enforcement action, but if you get pulled into the fray you want to have the best possible players on your team.

In the end, using an accredited background screening firm is your best bet in your effort to hire the best talent to meet your business needs and to provide a safe workplace. Accreditation is being achieved by more employment screeners, many insurers have accepted the value of accreditation, and the accreditation program itself is raising the bar.

Source: NAPBS.com, This article was not written by NAPBS. For detailed and specific information on the accreditation process visit NAPBS.com.



### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS:**

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