GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
EMPLOYEE

044 EMPLOYMENT AND SEPARATION

044.3 Conducting Reference Checks Policy

044.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction on conducting reference checks on applicants for employment by the Human Services Department (HSD).

044.3.2 Definitions

A. "Applicant" means any person who has applied to a position in the classified service.

B. "Reference check" means contacting current and previous supervisors/employers to obtain and verify information pertinent to the selection of an applicant.

044.3.3 Policy

A. Pursuant to HSD's Code of Conduct and this policy, a supervisor filling a vacant position is responsible for checking the employment references of candidates proposed for selection. Failure to check references in hiring or promoting an employee may be cause for disciplinary action against the supervisor.

B. Each applicant who is interviewed must sign the *Authorization to Release Information* form or its successor (obtained from the HSD Office of Human Resources (OHR) and available on the HSD website) which releases all former employers from any liability for furnishing information about a former employee. The supervisor must notify the applicant that failure to provide this signed release form when requested may adversely affect their consideration due to insufficient information.

C. Supervisors must contact at least three former supervisors/employers to obtain and verify information pertinent to the selection. A copy of the applicant's signed release form may be provided to the former employer. If unable to contact three former supervisors, contact OHR. Supervisors may contact other references provided to them in addition to the three former supervisors/employers.

D. Supervisors must inquire about and/or investigate gaps in employment history.

E. Supervisors must check with the former employer to see if the applicant has a history of violence. If the former employer chooses not to give out such

information, the attempt to elicit such information must be documented.

F. Whenever a former employer refuses to provide any information regarding the applicant, the supervisor will document their name, date, time and the fact that they were unable to get the requested information about the applicant.

G. If the selected candidate is already in State Government, in addition to contacting former supervisors/employers, the supervisor should contact the respective Human Resources/Personnel Office regarding a candidate's employment history and inquire about performance evaluation ratings and if disciplinary actions have been taken. A copy of the applicant's signed *Authorization to Release Information* should be provided to the other Department's Human Resources/Personnel Office.

H. Questions regarding the appropriate use and storage of information obtained through reference checks should be directed to OHR's Employee Relations Section.

APPROVED: DATE:

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