

GOUCHER COLLEGE BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY FOR COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the terms and conditions under which background checks of applicants for participation in Goucher's community-based learning and community service programs will be conducted.

II. Type of Background Checks Conducted

All applicants for positions in community-based learning and community service programs in which the applicant will have access to minors are required to complete an on-line background check through CertifiedBackground.com.

The following checks will be conducted:

- Residency history (all current and reported addresses for the last seven years on a specific individual based on his or her social security number)
- Social Security verification
- 7-Year County Criminal Search (based on residence history)
- Nationwide criminal database (including national sex offender search)

III. Procedure

Approval for service in a Goucher College community-based learning and community service program will be contingent on the satisfactory results of a background check. The college will ensure that all background checks are conducted in compliance with applicable federal and state statutes, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

A. Information Collection

Students will obtain their own background check using the on-line website provided by CertifiedBackground.com. Instructions for use of the site will be provided to applicants by the associate director of community-based learning and community service programs ("associate director"). Students will pay the cost of the check, but can request reimbursement of the fee on the basis of financial hardship. Such requests should be directed to the associate director.

B. Results of Background Checks

Results of background checks are available on-line to the student and to Goucher's associate director, and legal counsel.

If the background check is favorable and the student is otherwise eligible to participate in the program, no further action will be taken.

If the background check is unfavorable, the associate director will review the information in consultation with legal counsel. Other individuals who may be consulted include the associate dean for student engagement, the France-Merrick Professor in Service Learning and the vice president and dean of students. If a conviction or other unfavorable information is determined to be related to an applicant's ability to perform services in a community-based learning or community service program, the applicant may only be permitted to participate in such program with the approval of the associate dean for student engagement and the France-Merrick Professor in Service Learning.

In making the determination of position-relatedness, the associate director will consider how recently the unfavorable incident occurred; the frequency and severity of the incident(s); the age of the individual at the time of the incident; the accuracy of information provided on the application and during the interview process; evidence of rehabilitation; and the safety and security of the campus or service-learning site and assets, and of the members of the relevant communities, which will be the most important consideration.

If the associate director is considering whether to deny approval to an applicant based on unfavorable information in the credit report, the associate director must send the applicant a pre-adverse action letter. If the decision is made not to approve the applicant because of information included in a report, a final adverse action letter shall be sent to the applicant informing the applicant of his/her rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

IV. Confidentiality

Results of all background checks will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any person, except to the extent necessary to administer and enforce this policy, or as required by law or appropriate legal process. Criminal background investigation records will be maintained on-line by CertifiedBackground.com as part of a confidential file (to the degree possible), and no hard copies will be maintained by any employee of Goucher College.

APPROVED BY SANFORD J. UNGAR
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