

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

HIRING A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADER

CHECKING REFERENCES

Checking references is a positive way to avoid being trapped by someone who is a good short-term actor or actress. Failing to check references is really giving up the best source of information. However, this arena is filled with traps that must be avoided. The following suggestions can help obtain the best information with the least legal exposure.

1. At the end of an interview have the candidate read and sign the *Reference Check Release Form and letter*. A copy of these forms are included on the following pages.
2. At the end of an interview have the candidate answer the following questions:
 - “If I were to contact your former employer what would they say about your timeliness?”
 - “If I were to contact your former employer what would they say about your creativity?”
 - “If I were to contact your former employer what would they say about your sense of tact?”
 - “If I were to contact your former employer what would they say about your _____?”

Add whatever qualities or skills that the committee feels are most important. (Make sure none of the illegal questions mentioned earlier are asked.)

Make a note of the answers given by the candidate. Using the letter that is provided later in this section, send a copy of the candidate's responses to the former employer along with a copy of the Reference Checking Release Form. In this way, a former employer is asked to simply respond to specific objective statements. Be sure that you are requesting information that will ultimately be helpful in determining whether to offer the position or not.

If the above process is not practical, there is a form to use in the event that references are called by phone. The Reference Checking Form will provide a uniform record keeping system for calling references about a prospective candidate. Please understand that most businesses will say very little in a phone call reference check to avoid defamation of character lawsuits.

REFERENCE CHECK RELEASE FORM

As part of the hiring process, you should know that we will be checking your references. We may contact those persons whom you have identified to us as potential references. When we contact a reference, we ask a series of questions. They are about your personal background, education, work experience, character, personality, or personal habits. We may use an outside firm to check references. If we do, under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, we are required, upon your written request, to provide you with the name and address of the firm that is checking your references so that you may contact them for further information.

AGREEMENT

I have read the above paragraph and fully understand it. I hereby voluntarily consent to allow _____ Parish, or any of its officers, employees, agents, or designees, to check my references by contacting any person whom they deem to be an appropriate reference. _____ Parish representatives may ask any questions they consider relevant to their hiring decision, including questions about my personal background, education, work experience, character, personality, and personal habits.

Signed

Date