Employee Screening 101
A Thorough Background Check Takes Time

Criminal background checks are not created equal.

Depending upon how and where a background check is conducted can be the difference between the same person showing criminal convictions or a clean record. A thorough background check reviews many layers of information and takes time. To minimize the risk of a bad hire, it's worth taking the time to do a background check the right way.

After confirming your candidate's identity and residence history, the following resources should be investigated to determine if they have a criminal history.

Local Country Courts

The majority of crimes are committed and prosecuted at the local level.

Each US county (3,200) stores their own court history and criminal convictions.

Some of these courts do not store their records digitally.

Researching convictions in these jurisdictions requires on-site human research.
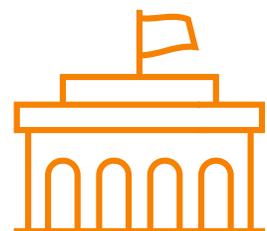
Nationwide Criminal Database

Multiple nationwide databases exist which aggregate county court records.

Not all counties report to these databases.

Databases are not updated in real time, so months of recent data can be missing.

Common names will return dozens of results which need to be carefully validated by a trained researcher.

Federal Criminal Records

Some crimes are not prosecuted at the local level.

Someone with a federal conviction would not appear in county court records.

The federal government makes this conviction history available for research.

Properly performed criminal background checks take time because records are not centralized and require trained research to access and validate.

If the purpose of employee background checks is to minimize the risk of a bad or dangerous hire, it only makes sense to run that screen as thoroughly as possible.

The cost of a "bad" hire is $50,000-$200,000. The cost of criminal activity by an employee can destroy a business, or even worse.