

Office of Human Resources
601 Employment Information

2025-06-18

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**Georgia Department of Human Services
Human Resources Policy #601**

Employment Information

Release Date: December 22, 2010

Revised Date: July 23, 2020

References: O.C.G.A. §34-1-4 — Employer immunity for disclosure of information regarding job performance
O.C.G.A. §50-18-70 — Inspection of Public Records
Rule of the State Personnel Board 478-1-06 — Recruiting, Screening and Hiring
DOAS Policy Memo 12/12/17 – Applicant Screening and Reference checks for Current or Former State of Georgia Employees
DHS Human Resources Policy #602 — Access to Personnel Related Public Records Based on the Georgia Open Records Act
DHS Human Resources Policy #603 — Official Personnel Files

All employment-related records are subject to disclosure to the public, unless specifically exempted in accordance with the Georgia Open Records Act. See DHS Human Resources Policy #602—Access to Personnel Related Public Records Based on the Georgia Open Records Act. Basic employment information is subject to disclosure and will be provided by authorized DHS officials as indicated in this policy. Employees' consent is not required to disclose basic employment information.

Section A: Access to Personal Information

1. Certain personal information about employees is not subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act and will only be released to authorized officials, as indicated in item #2 below. This information includes: an employee's social security number, home address, phone number, mother's birth name, debit and credit card information, other banking/financial information, insurance, medical information, and birthdate.
2. Personal information about current or former DHS employees is accessible without the employee's consent under the following circumstances:
 - a. The custodians have access to the information for maintenance purposes.
 - b. Division/Office Directors, designees and supervisors may have access to the information when necessary for employment-related purposes or on a "need-to-know" basis.
 - c. For purposes of investigating employment-related misconduct or for other legal, administrative, or regulatory reasons, information is available to authorized officials with organizations including, but not limited to, the following:
 - I. DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG),
 - II. DHS Office of Audits,
 - III. DHS Office of Human Resource (OHR),

- IV. DHS Department of Child Support Services (DCSS),
 - V. DOAS Workers' Compensation,
 - VI. Georgia Department of Labor,
 - VII. Federal Department of Labor,
 - VIII. Social Security Administration,
 - IX. Georgia Bureau of Investigation,
 - X. Federal Bureau of Investigation,
 - XI. Other federal, state, and local law enforcement or investigative agencies with a "need to know."
- d. Information may also be released in response to a subpoena or other appropriate inquiry issued in the course of litigation.
3. Employees may have access to their own personal information and may grant access in writing to other individuals or organizations.
 4. OHR should be contacted when requests for access to personal information are received.

Section B: Employment Verification

1. The Department of Human Services will verify basic employment information regarding employees' job titles, salaries, and dates of employment. Requests may be received from current or former employees or organizations such as financial institutions, rental or leasing companies and credit card companies.
 - a. Requests for verification of employment information should be obtained in writing, whenever possible (See Attachment #1).
2. Requests are to be sent to the appropriate OHR office for response.
3. Verification of employment information will be provided in writing. The Employment Verification Form may be used for this purpose.

Section C: Reference Checks

1. Reference information on current or former DHS employees must be provided by authorized officials to prospective employers.
 - a. DHS organizational units may determine which officials are authorized to provide reference information.
 - b. When considering a current or former State employee, reference checks must include contacting the current and previous State employers for job-related information.
 - c. If an employee has a long State employment history, the hiring agency may determine when it has sufficient reference information.
 - d. DHS will review the Applicant Verification Portal provided by the substance abuse testing administrator to ensure there is no active employment disqualification for a substance abuse testing violation.

- e. DHS will also review the State Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for previous and current State employment history.
 - f. If the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) indicates that the employee was dismissed or not recommended for rehire, the hiring agency is to seek more specific information from the previous employer as part of the reference check.
 - g. DHS requires applicants to sign a consent for release to gather reference information from current and previous employers.
 - h. Authorized officials are required to provide reference information on current and former employees when requests are received from other DHS managers.
 - i. Providing reference information to non-State employers is discretionary, unless required by law.
2. Reference information must be job-related and factually accurate. Information provided should be supported by performance evaluations, examples of work performance, attendance records or other objective indicators.
 3. Prospective employers may be advised that DHS employees have access to their performance evaluations and attendance records.
 4. Under the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, agencies who disclose to a prospective employer factual information regarding a current or former employee's job performance or ability to carry out their duties are presumed to be acting in good faith, unless confidential information is disclosed or a preponderance of evidence shows lack of good faith.
 5. When references are requested on employees who have been separated from DHS employment for serious infractions (e.g., disciplinary actions, drug-related offenses, theft, etc.), authorized officials are to discuss the request with OHR prior to releasing any information. The specific information to be released will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 6. DHS hiring officials or designees should always conduct reference checks prior to making employment offers.
 - a. Reference checks should be conducted in a structured manner using the Reference Evaluation Form (See Attachment #2).
 - b. Answers are to be documented and maintained with other selection materials.
 - c. Non-job-related inquiries are prohibited.

Section D: Documenting Poor Performance

1. To support effective screening of current and former State employees and to minimize the potential for an agency to hire an applicant with a history of poor performance, employing agencies are responsible for documenting deficiencies in job performance and adherence to employment standards. Examples of appropriate documentation include performance evaluations, corrective and disciplinary action letters, and notes from coaching or counseling sessions.
2. Effective documentation will alert a prospective employer to a history of poor performance. It can also assist a prospective employer with determining whether the past poor performance would be applicable to the new job.

Section E: Intern and Work Program Information

1. DHS managers are authorized to provide feedback to schools or organizations that place interns or similar work program participants within DHS. Information should be provided in the format required by the school or organization and may include evaluations of performance and recommendations for improvement. Questions regarding information that can be provided should be directed to OHR.

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local Human Resource Office, or email DHS-Policies@dhs.ga.gov.

601 A1 Employment Verification Form

601 A2 Reference Evaluation Form