

Background Screening: Trends and Uses in Today's Global Economy

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Executive Summary

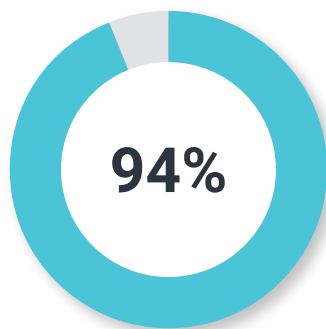
Professional background checks are key to help safeguard today's increasingly globalized workforce. A new survey from the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) affirms that nearly all organizations utilize background checks. This report reveals emerging trends in who is being screened and how often, what elements go into a background check and the increasing value of international screening capabilities.



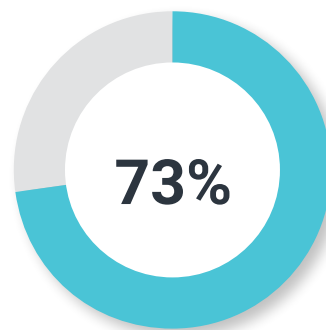
Background Screening Is Prevalent

Most organizations report conducting at least one type of background screening, and 73% state they have a documented policy for background screening procedures.

Though many organizations conduct these checks, costs and the length of time to get the results continue to be top challenges.



94% of employers state their organization conducts one or more types of employment background screening



73% of employers have a documented screening policy

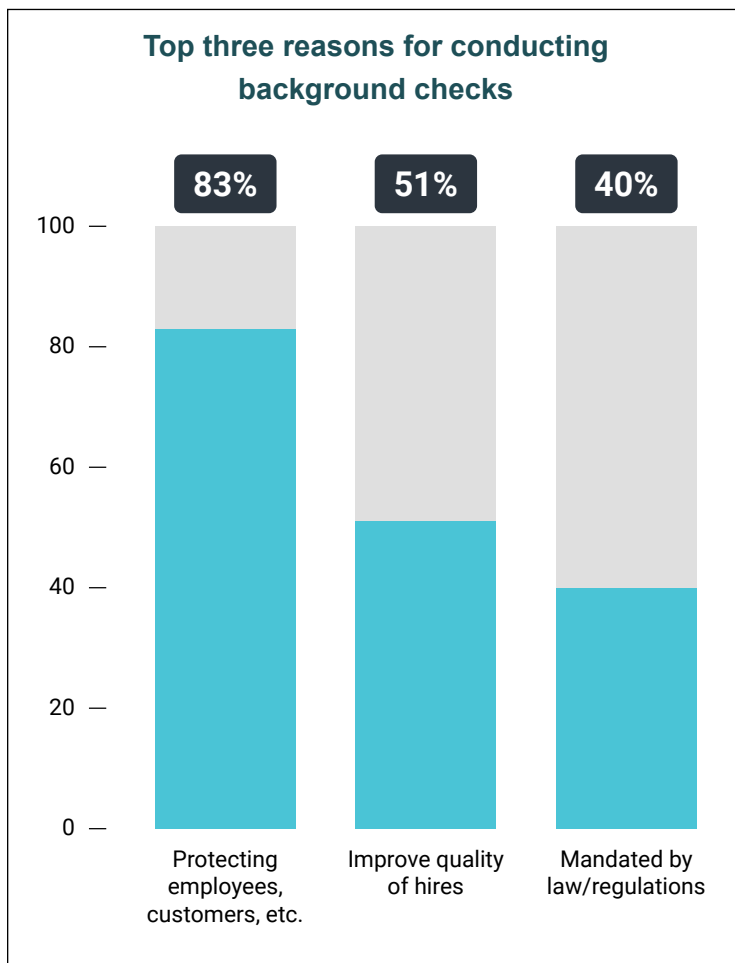
Safety and Improving the Quality of Hires Are the Top Reasons Employers Conduct Background Checks

The 2020 PBSA background screening survey results indicate that the reasons for conducting background checks are largely the same as previous years.

The top three reasons for conducting background checks are:

- protecting the safety of employees and customers (83%)
- improving the quality of hires (51%)
- mandated by law/regulations (40%)

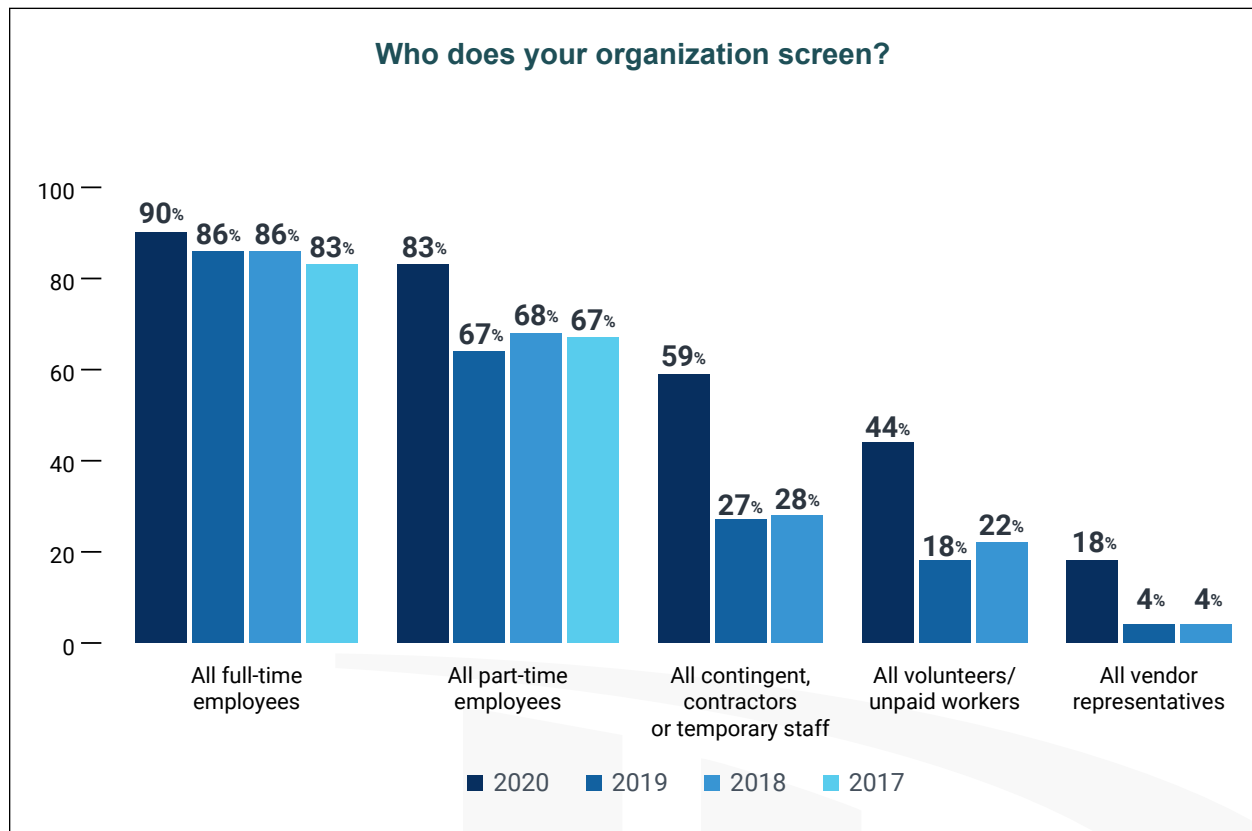
Survey respondents also cite protecting company reputation and preventing or reducing theft and embezzlement as motivation for background checks.



Employers Are Screening Individuals More Often

Employers are screening more types of employees more often. This includes more information in background checks and placing an increased value on international screening capabilities.

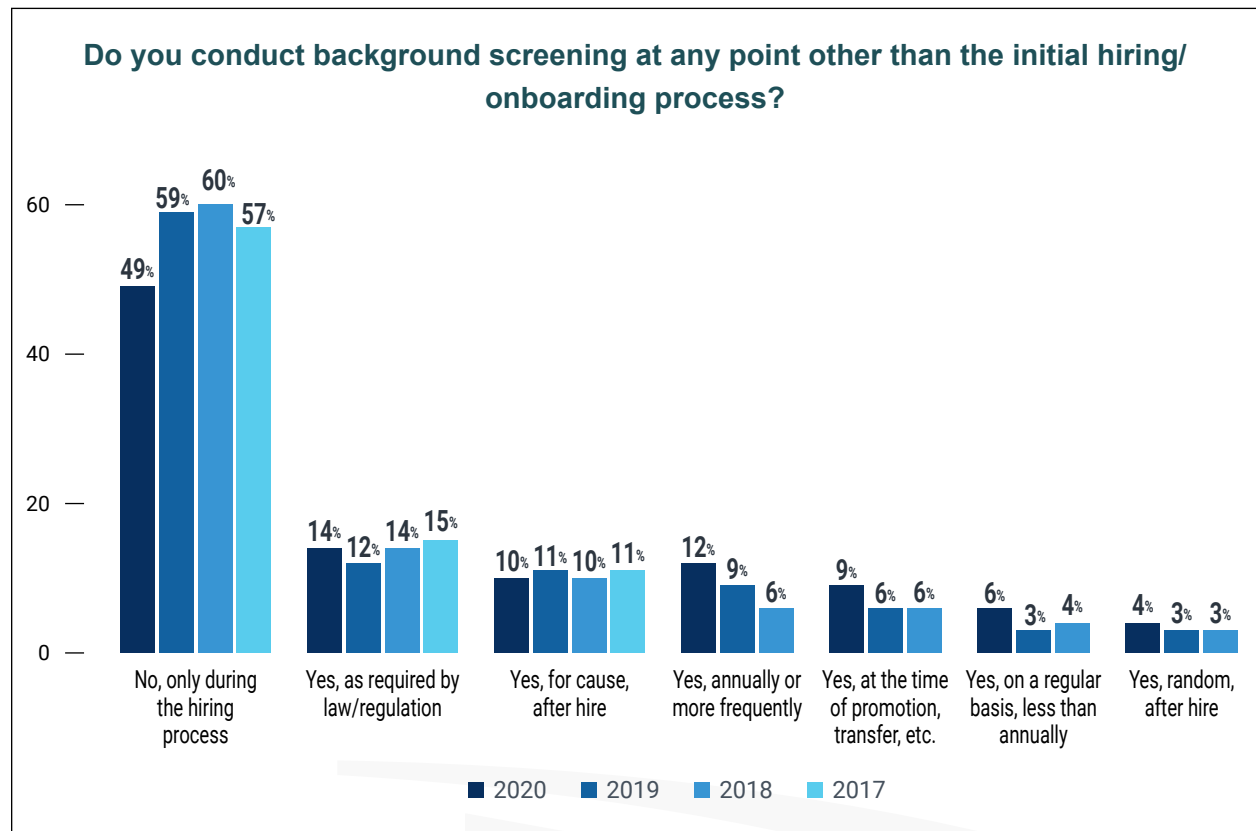
Ninety percent of employers now say they screen all full-time employees, compared to 86% in 2019. This year's survey also saw considerable increases in the number of organizations that screen other types of individuals, including part-time employees, contingent/temporary workers, volunteers and vendor representatives. This could indicate that employers increasingly realize the importance and accessibility of background screening and are applying it accordingly. It could also mean that organizations are now hiring a larger number of individuals who are not traditional full-time employees, as would befit the "Gig Economy" moniker applied to U.S. workforce trends in recent years.



*Some data for 2017 is unavailable

Checks Most Commonly Happen After an Offer

Most employers (66%) wait until after a conditional job offer to conduct a background check. However, when compared to previous years, organizations are now conducting checks more often outside the hiring process. To contrast, 49% of employers state they conduct background checks only during the hiring process, which is down 10 percentage points from 2019. Also, 12% are now conducting background checks annually or more frequently, compared to 9% in 2019. The rise of the gig economy may be increasing the demand for regular background screening.

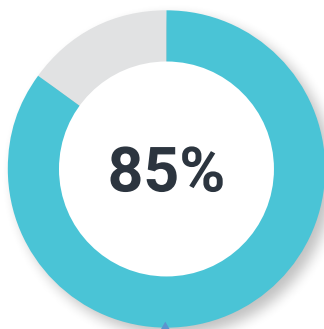


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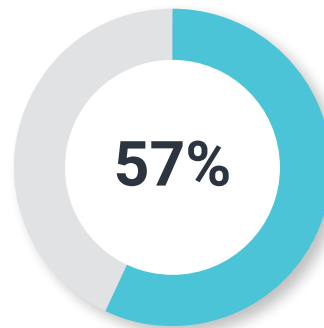
International Screening Capabilities Are Important

PBSA is the only global association of its kind with councils in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia-Pacific. PBSA has long recognized the value of international screening capabilities and recently rebranded to a truly international organization. This survey shows that employers, too, understand the importance and value of international background screening.

The 2020 survey found that 85% of employers say access to international screening capabilities is important with 57% saying international screening is important to their organization directly. Further, 24% say their organization conducts criminal background checks for candidates both within and outside the U.S.

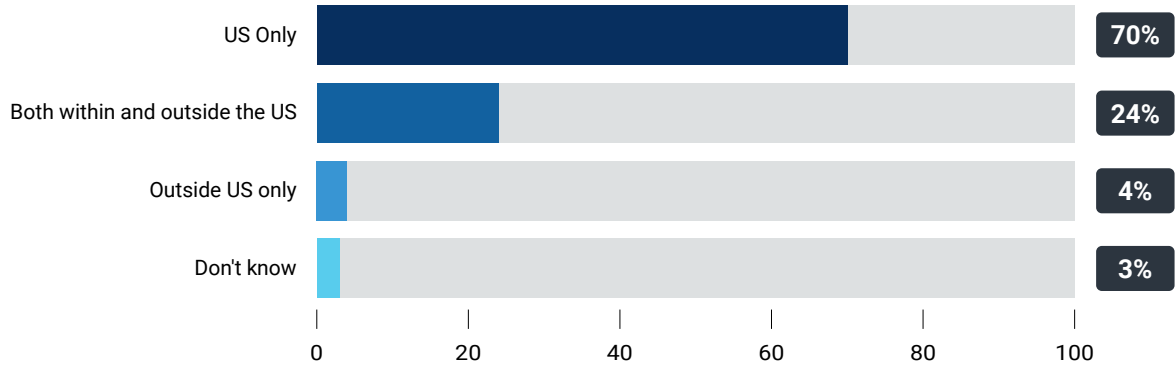


85% of employers think access to international screening capabilities is important.

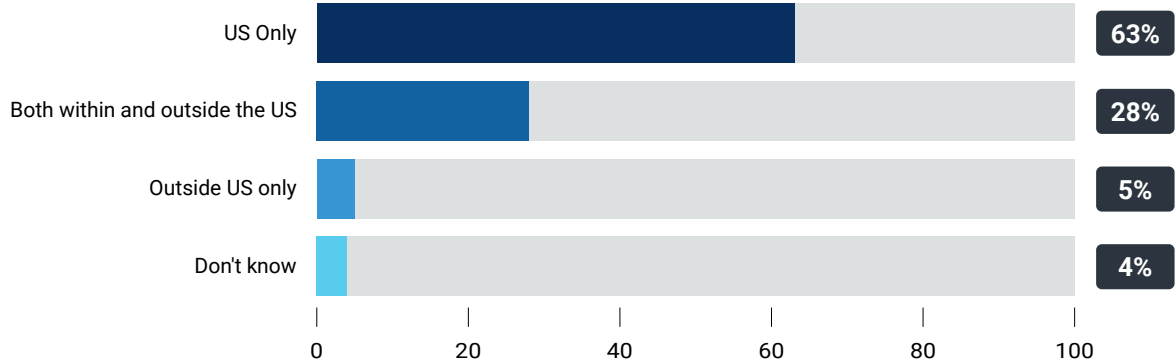


57% say international screening is important to their organization directly.

Survey Question: When conducting criminal background checks, where do the subjects (that is, job candidates) of those background checks reside?



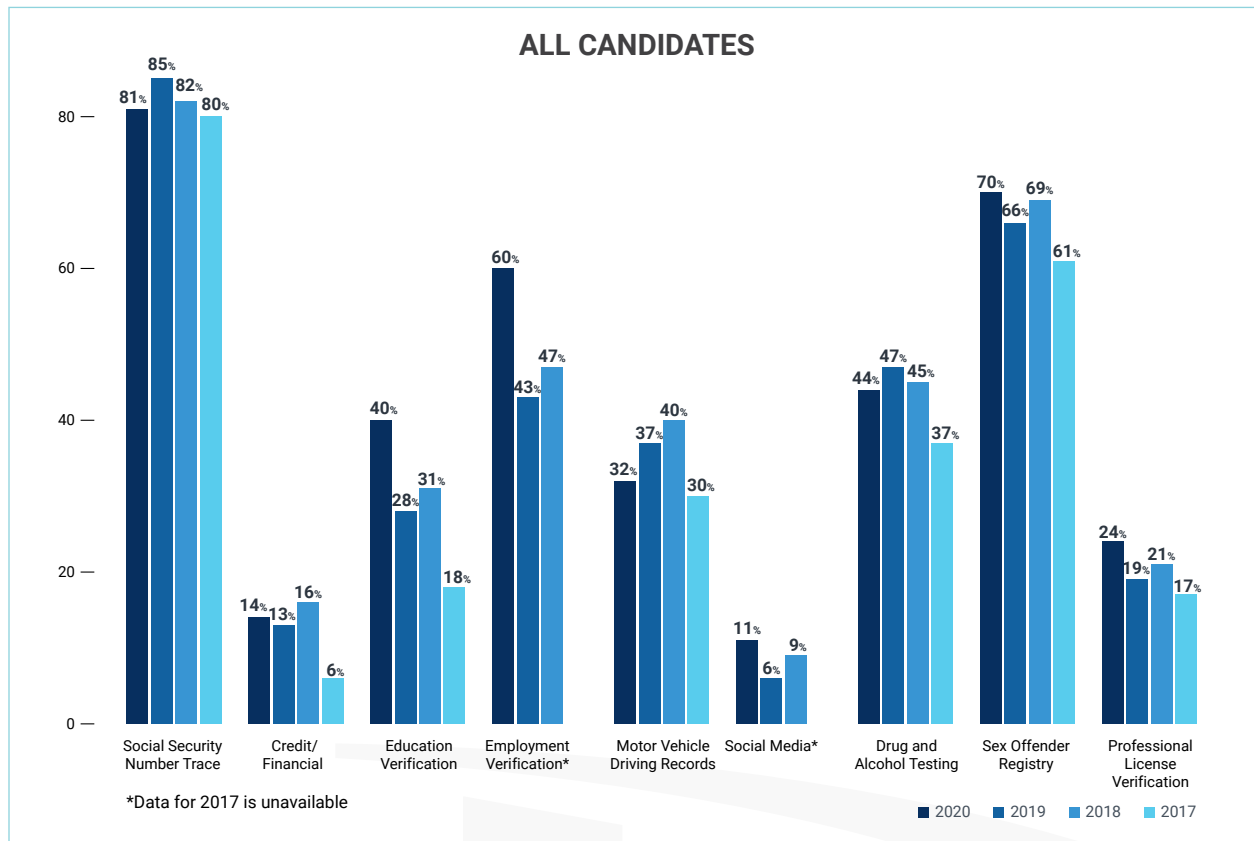
Survey Question: When conducting criminal background checks for your organization, for which locations do you conduct those checks?

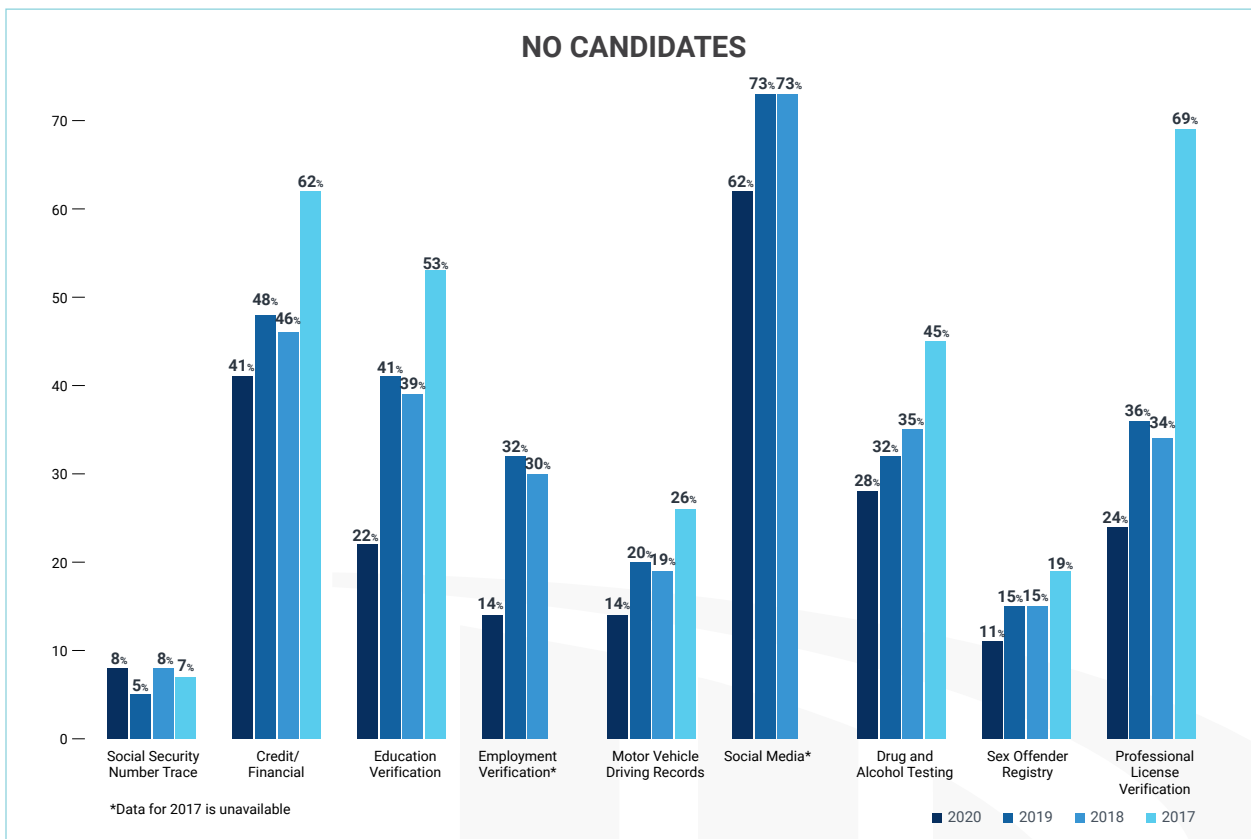
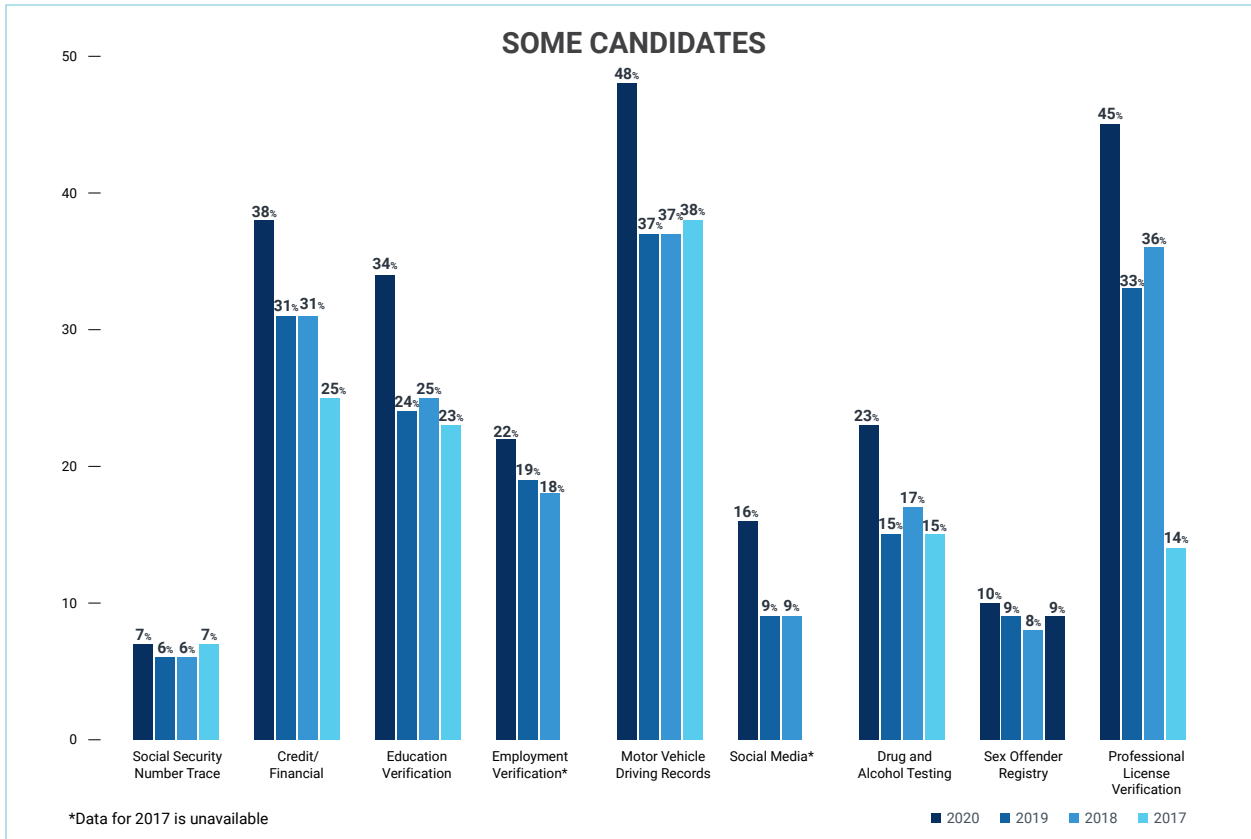


Background Checks Are More Robust

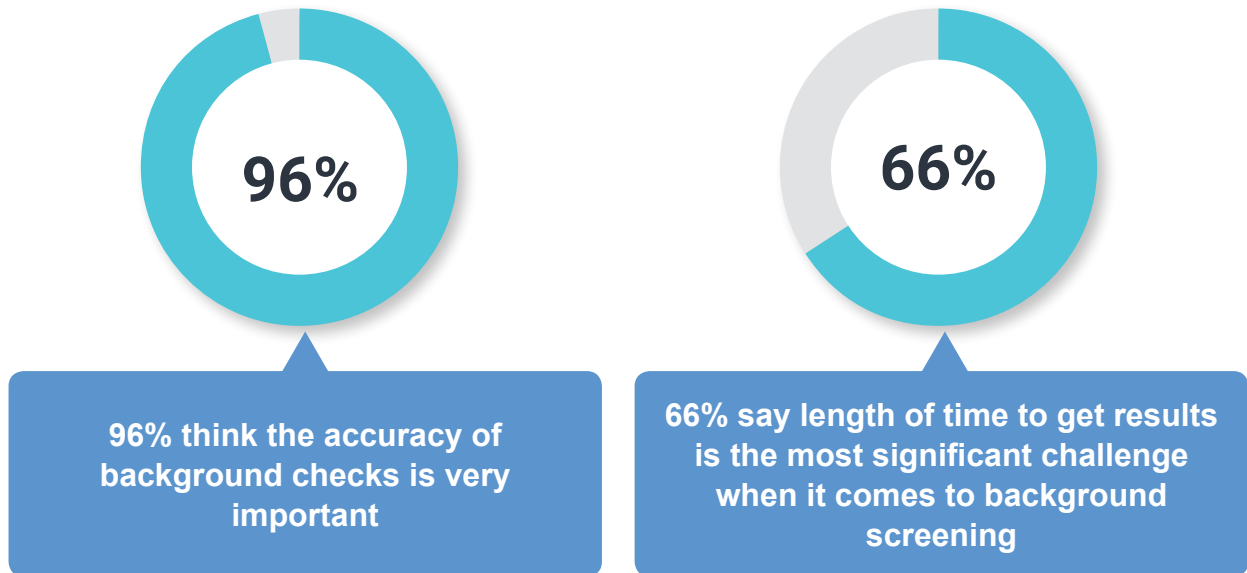
Nearly all employers include national criminal database (93%) and statewide/county/regional/local source (85%) searches for all or some candidates in their criminal background screening.

However, it appears that background checks are becoming more robust. Employers are checking significantly more employees and also including more elements of non-criminal records checks. These checks can include employment verification, social media searches, credit reports and professional license verification.





Access to Personal Identifiers Is Key to Success



Employers value both accuracy and efficiency. Both are dependent on access to personal identifiers such as complete name and complete date of birth. Redactions of these identifiers by federal, state and local court systems can lead to delays in hiring and is an unfortunate reality in many courts. This is particularly true in the federal court data system, known as Public Access to Court Electronic Records, which systematically excludes dates of birth. This can lead to applicants losing out on a job while employers confirm identifiers.

PBSA and the Consumer Data Industry Association recently released the [Public Access Software Specification for Court Records](#) guidelines to encourage and help court administrators implement software that improves the quality of public records, thus improving the timeliness and accuracy of background checks.

Multiple Types of Organizations Use Background Checks

This survey included organizations of all types and sizes. Thirty-seven percent of respondents are from companies with fewer than 100 employees, and 29% have 100-499 employees. Fifty-four percent of entities represented are privately held, and 18% are non-profit.

About PBSA

Founded as a non-profit trade association in 2003, the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) was established to represent the interest of companies offering employment and tenant background screening services. PBSA currently represents nearly 900 member companies engaged in employment and tenant background screening around the world. PBSA is the trusted global authority for the screening profession. In pursuit of their mission to advance excellence in the screening profession, PBSA promotes and advocates for ethical business practices and fosters awareness of privacy rights and consumer protection issues. For more information on background screening, visit our website at www.thepbsa.org

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